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AN

ESSAY

ON

REASON.

BY

SIR GEORGE MACKENZIE.

GLASGOW,

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TO THE HONOURABLE

ROBERT BOYLE, ESQ.

I KNOW nothing (Sir,) more inconſiſtent with right reaſon, or which deſerves more to be reformed amongſt learned men, than their way of dedicating books: and that we may the better underſtand what ought to be done in this age, let us look back into what was done by the antients.

The poets did indeed invoke their gods or the muſes in the beginning of their works, but that was rather to obtain their aſſiſtance, than to beſtow upon them panegyrics; but their praiſing the gods was a ſafe ſubject in which they could not exceed: and therefore, though theſe invocations were the firſt occaſion of writing dedications to mor-

tals, yet flattery in this made them miſtake their model ſo far, that at laſt ſome of the poets did likewiſe invoke the aſſiſtance of their emperors, as if they had been gods as well as patrons.

Others of the poets did very antiently dedicate their works to men alſo, as Heſiod who was older than Homer, dedicates or rather addreſſes his firſt poem to Perſes; but it is very obſervable, that he and others in ſuch like addreſſes, rather excite the perſons, to whom they addreſs, to virtue and glory, than magnify them for having attained to the perfection of either or both. Yet ſome of theſe poets have left us dedications ſo excellent, that they are as little to be imitated as cenſured, ſuch as:

Hor. Epiſt. 1. Lib. 2.

Cum tot ſuſtineas et tanta negocia ſolus:
Res Italas armis tuteris, moribus ornes:
Legibus emendes: in publica commoda peccem,
Si longo ſermone morer tua tempora, Caeſar.

And others of them, ſuch as Virgil, end their poems with very decent and

delicate compliments, as that which cloſes the 4th book of his Georgics,

Haec ſuper arvorum cultu pecorumque canebam,
Et ſuper arboribus: Caeſar dum magnus, ad altum
Fulminat Euphratem bello, victorque volentes
Per populos dat jura, viamque affectat Olympo.

which exceed, in my humble opinion, the famed and large dedications of Grotius and Cauſabon.

It was uſual amongſt the modeſt antients to addreſs their books to ſuch as they thought able to correct them, ſeeking rather advice than patronage: and thus Plutarch tells us in the life of Lucullus, that Scylla having wrote an hiſtory, ſent it to Lucullus to be corrected; and the Greek word uſed there, ſeems to me to import only ADLOCUTIO. And I think that the antients have found protection and patronage even in thoſe addreſſes wherein advice was ſought for: who durſt have cenſured, as Tully προσεφώνησε.

obſerves, what Brutus or Pomponius Atticus approved?

Some alſo prefixed modeſt prefaces, wherein they acknowledged the favours done them, and told the occaſion of their writing, as Vitruvius to Auguſtus; others did thereafter in imitation of the writers of Tragedies and Comedies, addreſs themſelves in a prologue, as Valerius Maximus to Tiberius; and this I think he did to give his fancy ſcope, as a poet, to praiſe with the latitude that poets take; for that is the firſt debauch I find committed of this kind, for he could not have ſaid greater things to a worſe man.

To ſhun which exceſs; ſome gave to their books the names of the muſes, as Herodotus; or of men of great merit, as Plato did in his Socrates, or Tully in Laelius, &c. or elſe omitted all addreſſes, as Thucidides, Livy, Saluſt; or at moſt extended not their addreſſes beyond a mere compellation,

ſuch as that in St. Luke to Theophilus; by which poſſibly may be meant any Chriſtian under this appellative name, rather than a particular patron or friend, as ſome books are now addreſſed to the Chriſtian reader, in imitation it may be of him; for it is obſervable, that the church-men imitated this Κράτιστε Θεόφιλε, of St. Luke, and thus Origen dedicates his book againſt Celſus, with this compellation, Φιλόθεε Αμβρόσιε: and Euſebius names his patron Θεόδοτε Φίλε Θεῷ.

At laſt the word Dedication was brought in by flattery; and books were dedicated to men in imitation of their dedicating temples, ſtatues, and other things to the gods; nor did this extravagant way of exceſſive praiſing ever appear, till the world was, under Tiberius, corrupted in all its morals. This depraved cuſtom was alſo much heightned by the panegyrics, made by Pliny to Trajan, and by Euſebius to the great

Conſtantine, who thought that they might more juſtly praiſe the good than others might impious emperors, tho' I am afraid the eloquence which charms us in thoſe two diſcourſes, ſhall never be able to account for the ill example they have given.

My deſign in all this is to ſhew, that we can as little juſtify our flattery by the practice of the antients as by the principles of reaſon, by which they always regulated their eloquence; and therefore it ſeems to me, that dedications ſhould be brought back to the antient model, either of a naked compellation, which ſatisfies abundantly friendſhip; or of acknowledging favours, which ſatisfies gratitude; or of exciting the perſons, to whom we write, to deſerve thoſe praiſes which are now moſt unjuſtly beſtowed upon them; which is a Chriſtian duty. And I cannot but obſerve three very ill conſequences which ariſe naturally and neceſſarily

from our late dedications; the firſt is, that they learn men to lye and flatter, and cuſtom hath almoſt legitimated this crime, and made it a duty. Secondly, they have poiſoned the very fountains of truth ſo far, that poſterity can hardly diſtinguiſh betwixt thoſe who have deſerved well or ill, flattery thinking always fit to ſupply by its exceſſive praiſes, what is wanting in due merit; and therefore by how much their patrons deſerve ill, they praiſe ſo much the more, and the only mark of virtue in an author or merit in a patron now is, that there is no extraordinary thing ſaid in any addreſs to the one by the other: for who can believe an author ſpeaks truth in his book, who lyes and flatters in its very beginning; or that a patron has any modeſty or common ſenſe, who ſuffers himſelf to be ſo impoſed upon? if the patron believe what the author ſays, he muſt be a fool; and if he believes him not, he muſt think the au-

thor one; and ſince they who lye improbably, are thought fools in all things elſe, why not in this too, in which they exceed the moſt romantic travellers, for they only would impoſe on us in things which we know not, but theſe in things wherein we cannot but diſcover them? and I wonder why they do not as well praiſe the French king for having found out America, or for having vanquiſhed Alexander the Great, as for thoſe things which they of late aſcribe to him in their dedications. Thirdly, our late dedications have really corrupted the eloquence of the age; for whereas the true ornaments of eloquence are to be natural and decent in expreſſing our thoughts, theſe dedications have blown our ſtyle into a tympany, and have ruined its natural beauty by fulſome and ill placed daubing paints: which made Chryſippus, as Laertius tells us, decry all

Δοκεῖ δὲ ὑπερόπλης τὶς γεγονέναι τοσαῦτα γῦν βι-

dedications to kings and princes, leſt they ſhould entice men to flattery; but this were to run from one exceſs to another.

βλία γράψας. ὀ-
θενὶ τῶν βασιλέων
προσεφώνησε.

I deſign, Sir, nothing in this eſſay, but to hold out a lanthorn to thoſe who are ready to ſplit on a rock; and I wiſh rather that this may be one of the works that may follow me, than one of thoſe that may bring me reputation: and I ſend this to you as Lucullus did to Scylla for correction; or as Cicero did to Atticus, as a token of our friendſhip, and of my juſt eſteem of your piety and learning.

G. M.

AN

ESSAY ON REASON.

PART I.

How weakly men reason in matters of greatest importance.

IT may ſeem a bold undertaking in any man to own right reaſon in this age, it being the declared enemy of our intereſts and inclinations, for it may poſſibly excite man to reflect upon what the world and himſelf does, and ſo inſpire him with thoughts contrary to thoſe which are generally received, and that is the only unpardonable error. It may likewiſe ſeem ridiculous to think, that there is any common ſtandard of reaſon amongſt men, ſince that charms in one country, which is abhorred in others, and the very imaginary lines which divide kingdoms, ſeem likewiſe to divide their way of thinking, and to make a different geography in the reaſon which they adore, as well as in the earth on which they trample; every age of the world has almoſt had a different way of reaſoning, and every age in man ſuggeſts to him contrary thoughts, in the preſent he condemns what himſelf formerly admired: ſo little influence has

it upon the beſt refined judicatures and aſſemblies, that the moſt infallible churchmen, the moſt learned judges, and the moſt zealous patriots muſt truſt to voting, becauſe they cannot to reaſoning, and they are by this likewiſe ſo often miſled, that it may be expected men will one day agree to decide matters by the feweſt votes, as the wiſer have always told us, that votes are rather to be weighed, than numbred. It has often grieved me, that men could gueſs the deciſion and determination of any point to be debated, before they heard the reaſons to be produced upon either ſide, and to hear them laugh at ſuch as truſted to the ſolidity of the reaſons they were to produce, being fully convinced that the point would be determined by intereſt, and not by reaſon. The Inka of Peru was much in the right, when he regreted, that his predeceſſors had not obliged him to worſhip a reaſonable man; yet his choice in this had been unſucceſsful; for it would have been as hard to have found him, except he had believed his prieſt, who had undoubtedly told him he was the man. And tho' I believe not that French phyſician who aſſures us, he found in his travels a nation that differed altogether from us in our way of reaſoning, as if God deſigned to ſhew mankind that his omnipotency is not tyed in this to any known meaſures; yet I ſee, even amongſt ourſelves, that conveniency (the gentler name of avarice) pride, revenge, bigotry, education, and every thing elſe paſs for reaſon, except reaſon it

ſelf, which makes me oft-times cry out, 'Is this 'that nobler creature formed after the image of 'God, for whom Chriſt died, and who is to be 'co-heir with him of his everlaſting kingdoms!' All which notwithſtanding it is undeniably true, that there is ſomething in man more ſublime than can be aſcribed to fleſh and blood, that dull matter could never inſpire him with theſe penetrating, ſubtile, comprehenſive, generous, and elevated thoughts, which made the Pagans believe, that his ſoul was *particula Divinae Naturae*, a parcel of that ſame divine ſubſtance of which the gods were formed, and that men ſo qualified were demi-gods, and God Almighty himſelf has by a ſurer revelation revealed to us, that this noble ſoul was formed after his image, and it was moſt conſequential that God who is infinite, being to communicate himſelf to ſome of his creatures, to the end his greatneſs and goodneſs might be known to them, he ſhould, in order to this, breathe into them ſomewhat that might comprehend, at leaſt, ſome ideas of that infinite perfection; and therefore it was neceſſary that the ſoul ſhould be an image of what was infinite, and that we might underſtand this from ſome exterior and ſenſible repreſentations and things, he has formed his very body (the caſket wherein that noble jewel is kept) after a very wonderful manner: thus by ſmall and imperceptible rays darted into his eye, the repreſentations of the vaſt hemiſphere, are imprinted ſo on that

little tablet, that it ſeems as great and diſtinct there, as in the original; all he ever heard is laid up in his memory, as diſtinctly as papers in a cabinet. And almoſt by the ſame motion of the tongue; or at leaſt, without any ſtudied variation, vaſt numbers of delicate words, or harmonious ſounds, do, in a way unknown, and unperceptible by fleſh and blood, ſally out in mighty ſwarms and armies, which paſſing thus undiſcovered, through the air, enter at many thouſand ears in the ſame figure, ranks, and files, wherein they were at firſt ſpoke; and there, in a ſpiritual way, they charm ſome, and enrage others; they animate ſome, and diſcourage others; working almoſt as great varieties as they bring.

Divine wiſdom alſo foreſeeing that Intereſt would perſuade men to pull all to pieces, whilſt each drew all to himſelf, he impreſt upon this ſoul common principles, which even thoſe muſt reverence who neglect them, and therefore they err, not in the rule, but in the application, and cheat themſelves by ſubterfuges, the recurring to which infers neceſſarily, that theſe principles are ſubmitted to by the moſt ſtubborn, and ſomewhat reſpected by the wildeſt in ſublunary matters; and yet in what concerns our immortal ſouls, and eternal ſtate, we are more negligent, as will appear too clearly by theſe following particulars, which I have claſſed according to their different inferences.

I have oft-times admired to ſee men buſied about nothing, ſave external and ſenſual objects; but it is yet ſtranger to find, that amongſt ſuch as are convinced, that knowledge is as much to be preferred to all other things, as the ſoul is to the body; there are yet ſome ſo ſenſual, even in this point, that the knowledge they ſeek after is but a meer delicate ſenſuality. Mathematicians conſider chiefly how to meaſure bodies, phyſicians how to know and cure men, as ſoldiers do how to deſtroy them. But the ſtudy of Chriſtian morality (which has for its object the ſoul of man heightned by the Chriſtian religion, teaching him how to underſtand the duty of that ſoul to God) is too much neglected, as a thing obvious and eaſy: whereas when our Saviour came into the world, he neither taught mathematics, medicine, nor phyſiology, tho' all theſe were much conſidered in that age, wherein he aſſumed our nature; and he could have made himſelf as much admired by clearing myſterious doubts in theſe, as by working miracles; but he paſſing by all theſe as leſs uſeful notions, and ſuch as too frequently divert and diſtract, rather than inform; he declares he was come to make man happy, and begins his miniſtry by an admirable ſermon on the mount, whereby, in order to the making him happy, he teaches him to reaſon rightly upon his duty to God and men: and it is ſtrange, that we ſhould think dull matter is able to afford more noble contemplations, than that ſubtile,

that ſublime, that vaſt, and that nimble ſoul, which retains ſo far the image of its Maker, as to be inſcrutable in all its faculties: and oh what wonderful ſprings and motions, what various windings and flights, what boundleſs and new ſpheres and worlds are there in his reflections, and what things are daily ſaid, and volumes written on the love to women, which is but the excurſion of one of them. Our diſeaſes cannot conceal themſelves being tyed to matter, but the diſeaſes of our immortal ſouls are ſo concealed by ſelf-love, which loves to cover its own imperfections, and to hide its own retreats, that they are paſt finding out; and if a little microſcope can diſcover to the eye new and ſtrange things in objects that have been daily ſeen, without being conſidered for many ages; what wonderful diſcoveries may ſerious thinking men make in ſo immenſe an object that has been ſo much neglected? eſpecially ſince the thoughts of man do change and vary themſelves into as many ſhapes, and give themſelves as many colours as they pleaſe: and every duty or error is really a different object as they are in conjunction with, or in oppoſition to one another; whereas all other objects are incapable of ſuch variations either from themſelves or others: and tho' God has deſigned to be known in his works, yet he ſeems on purpoſe to have made the knowledge of them ſo unſearchable to natural philoſophers, and the ſucceſs ſo little able to reward or honour

their endeavours, to the end they might the more reliſh moral philoſophy, which is then only uncertain, when, like the other, it grows more a ſcience than a duty.

In my reaſoning I will uſe the forms preſcribed by God himſelf in his holy ſcriptures; wherein when he would convince man of his folly, ſin, or ingratitude, he argues with him from his own conceſſions, in theſe caſes, or his own practice, on all other occaſions: as for inſtance, when he ſends Nathan to David, he aſks him what the man deſerved, who having great herds and flocks of his own, took a poor man's lamb out of his boſom? And David, having in great anger ſworn that he ſhould die, Nathan then tells him, it was his caſe, and condemns him from his own mouth: and God ſays to his people, who acknowledged him to be their Lord and Father, but walked not ſuitably to their acknowledgment, 'If I be 'a father, where is mine honour, and if I be a ma-'ſter, where is my fear?' Malach. 1. 6. He calls to them, Iſai. 1. 18. 'Come, let us reaſon toge-'ther;' and admiring the unreaſonableneſs of unthinking man, he appeals to the heavens and earth, 'Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, 'for the Lord hath ſpoken! I have nouriſhed 'and brought up children, and they have rebel-'led againſt me! The ox knoweth his owner, 'and the aſs his maſter's crib: but Iſrael doth 'not know, my people do not conſider!' and in the ſeveral goſpels we find our bleſſed Saviour,

after the ſame manner, confuting the Jews, and convincing all his hearers. Nor do I find ſo much delicate reaſoning in any of thoſe books, highly eſteemed by our men of ſenſe, who ſlight too much that admirable one, which God himſelf owns as his ſacred word: and I admire our Saviour, as much for his reaſonings as for his miracles. Thus when he would convince men of the folly of caring immoderately for the things of this world, he aſks them, What profit ſhall it be to gain all the world, that ſoon periſhes, if they loſe their own ſoul, which is immortal? 'And 'which of you, (ſays our Lord) by taking thought, 'can add one cubit to his ſtature?' And urges them, not to fear want, becauſe, if they who are ſinful know how to provide for their own families, how much more ſhall your father, which is in heaven, know how to provide for you, if ye be his children? 'Behold, (ſays our bleſſed Maker) the 'fowls of the air, for they ſow not, neither do 'they reap, yet your heavenly Father feedeth 'them; are not you much better than they?'

For eſtabliſhing this my poſition, it is fit to conſider, that ſuch as are reaſonable, endeavour to ſhew it in the greateſt concerns; and it implies a want, or weakneſs of reaſon, to be exact and delicate in inconſiderable and ſilly things, and yet to err and be careleſs in matters of greateſt conſequence: and who would not laugh at an embaſſador or a general, who would value himſelf upon his dancing or playing upon the

lute, beſtowing upon theſe exerciſes the time due to his king, country, and negotiations; which makes me admire, why in this fooliſh age, we call theſe men of good ſenſes, and ſtrong ſpirits, who can criticiſe Virgil, Juvenal, Livy, Tacitus, or it may be, underſtand the mathematics, or converſation; whilſt we are convinced, that altho' they believe there is a God, yet they mind him not, and care leſs for their ſouls than they do for any of their ordinary recreations, tho' they are forced to tremble at its ill condition, when they begin to conſider it.

One of the things which prompted me to write this book, was the reading of a French treatiſe, *De la Juſteſſe*, wherein tho' he made me expect great matters, by promiſing to learn us to think juſtly; yet it only taught how to chuſe true epithets, or underſtand criticiſms, and ſuch trivial knacks: but, alas, it is more to be regreted, that men ſhould have the ſenſe to laugh at others, for not having conſidered the plot and deſign of their plays; whilſt many who paſs for refined wits, want one in their whole life; and where the want of it is not only a greater ſhame, but is of greater danger, ſince a man cannot err here without being ruined to all eternity: and one of theſe great wits, without a ſolid deſign in his life, appears to me, like a glorious, firſt-rate ſhip, magnificently equipped, richly gilded, and abundantly provided of all neceſſaries; but becauſe it wants a rudder, and

a ſkilful pilot, fluctuating in a great ſtorm, and near a dangerous ſhore, on which it is driven with violence, threatned by the wind, and overflown by the billows; ſometimes ſhattered by one rock, and ſometimes by another, till at laſt it ſinks down irrecoverably into an unfathomable and dreadful abyſs. Whether then is the owner of this ſhip, who looks on unconcernedly, and perhaps, would not leave his whore, game, or ſupper; or that poet, who wrote his play without a plot, moſt to be contemned? yet he who has no deſign to ſave his immortal ſoul from endleſs torments, is a much greater fool than either; which recommends to me the ſenſe of a wiſer, tho' a heathen poet, on this ſubject, and which I wiſh the whole tribe would ſeriouſly conſider.

Diſcite, o miſeri, et cauſas cognoſcite rerum,
Quid ſumus, et quidnam victuri gignimur, ordo.
Quis datus, aut metae quam mollis flexus et unde,
Quis modus argento, quid fas optare, quid aſper.
Utile nummus habet: patriae cariſque propinquis
Quantum elargiri deceat: quem te Deus eſſe
Juſſit et humana qua parte locatus es in re.

It is a pleaſant thing to hear us admire men, for conſidering exactly the anatomy, ſpecialities, and natures of fiſhes, fowls, flies, and other inſects; and yet never conſider whence themſelves came, whither they are going, or what is their

duty whilſt they remain here. And I wonder why we ſhould think it juſt, to look upon men in *bedlam*, tho' they be very reaſonable in many things, if they be very diſtracted in any one; as I know one, who ſeemed a diſcreet perſon, and could converſe moſt pertinently in every thing, till they ſpoke of the moon; but upon hearing that named, fell inſtantly a ſtaring, and into great extravagancies, believing himſelf to be ſecretary to the moon: and others will be diſcreet enough, till you mention the name of ſuch a man or woman; and yet we do not conclude ſuch mad and diſtracted, who, tho' they underſtand to meaſure heaven, never deſign to enter into it; and who can eloquently convince men of eternal torments, and fright them from the wicked courſe which lead to theſe, and yet ruin themſelves on the precipices againſt which they guard others. And who would not think a phyſician mad, for all his ſkill, if after he had made a learned diſcourſe, to prove a liquor to be poiſon, he ſhould drink it off himſelf; and yet more, if he would not take an antidote, tho' ready, and which he knew would ſecure him?

I ſhall but lightly touch that ridiculous and impudent extravagance of ſome, who, rather pretending to reaſon, than having it, take pains to perſuade themſelves and others, that there is not a God, whilſt even the ſubtilty which they uſe, when they are endeavouring to prove this their aſſertion, does neceſſarily prove his being:

it being impoſſible, that matter and chance, (their great idols) could forge and poliſh ſuch ſubtile notions: and how can they imagine, that ſince their own little affairs could not be managed without foreſight and conduct, that yet this great and glorious univerſe, which comprehends ſo many millions, ſuch as they, ſhould be ſo exactly and juſtly governed, by blind chance? If there were no men but the ſilly and humorous aſſerters of this opinion, I ſhould be aſhamed to bring man as an inſtance of the power and wiſdom of God: let us then conſider this creature, formed of I know not what, fed, breathing, and growing in the womb, we know not how; but from thoſe deſpicable beginnings, one riſes in a ſhort time, to meaſure the heavens, to calculate their motions, and to imitate their lightning and thunder; another does for his own glory, form ſuch models of religion as ſeduces, and draws after him millions of men, contrary to their former intereſts, as well as former inclinations: a third, by his ſkill, conduct, and courage, makes even the remoteſt countries of the world to tremble, overturning, and confounding that world, whereof he is ſo ſmall a part: and a fourth, by drawing ſweetly, and gently together very diſtant and different reflections, and thoughts, which come readily, as it were upon his call, from their ſeveral repoſitories, forms an harangue, or a poem, which pleaſes or torments the hearers irreſiſtibly, as they have commiſſion from their author;

it being harder to reſiſt them than to make them: can ſo regular things be aſcribed to wild chance, or ſuch ſubtile things to dull matter, which by its nature, moves neceſſarily and without choice? the beſt contrived machines can only repeat; but man chuſes his own thoughts, and varies or changes them as he pleaſes.

I deſire our wits to conſider, that every thing which they ſee, or know, is ſo marvellouſly fitted to ſome uſe, that as they could not be wanted, ſo they cannot be contrived better: and it is ridiculous to anſwer with Epicurus, (who, tho' he denied providence, yet denied not a Deity) that theſe things were not made for theſe uſes, as we pretend, but were, in proceſs of time, made uſe of to theſe ends by wit or neceſſity: for even brutes do immediately after they are brought forth, run to thoſe things which they need, with greater exactneſs than man could teach them; and how could men, by reaſon, make every thing uſeful, if ſo infinite a being did not direct and ſuperviſe their almoſt infinitely various neceſſities and deſigns, and inſtruct them, by the uſe of thinking, (that wonderful engine) to accommodate every thing to its true uſe. The next thing I recommend to them, is to conſider that all the principles of juſtice and government, without which, the world could not ſubſiſt, depend upon the belief of this infinite being; for how could I convince a man without this, that it were not fit to poiſon his brother for an eſtate;

or his prince, when he thought that by that he might ſtep into his throne; which oft-times might be done privately enough, to eſcape the puniſhment of laws, if they could that of conſcience: nor is it of any force to tell us, that politicians have only invented this for their own conveniency, ſince even this anſwer preſuppoſes that there was a pre-diſpoſition on the ſpirits of men, to receive and ſubmit to this impreſſion, which is an unanſwerable proof of its truth; and this trick had not been long believed, had it been only ſuch; nor could their inventions ſecure us againſt private treachery, tho' it could againſt open force; nor can I omit to obſerve from this anſwer, how unfit theſe men would be to govern others, and how unſufferable they are under all governments; who thus expoſe to contempt that which they confeſs to be the great engine of government. I might likewiſe urge the conſent of all nations, which, by how much they became the more poliſhed and civilized, do ſo much the more reſt on this belief. The certainty that has ariſen from predictions which are above nature, and the wonderful effects wrought by miracles, even againſt it, are confirmed to us, by the unerring teſtimony of thoſe ſenſes, which our atheiſts make the only and ſure teſt of knowledge. And do not we perceive, that that light of reaſon, which by conſtant and penetrating reflections, in time, diſcovered, overcame, and baffled every cheat and error; has notwithſtanding, more

fully fixed, aſcertained, and cleared the being of a God, whoſe power affords us ſuch protection; and whoſe providence affords us ſuch beautiful and pleaſant contemplations, that to love that life, without believing his being, is to be without that ſenſe and wit which theſe wild ſceptics pretend to; who, whilſt they ſhun to be miſerable, make themſelves ſo, and whilſt they pretend to paſs for wits, demonſtrate themſelves to be fools, and brutiſh. I purpoſely avoid the proof of this by metaphyſical arguments, becauſe God's own way of proving it, is, by deſiring us to conſider the ſun, moon, and ſtars, and the other objects, which are obvious to all men; for it was fit, that what was to be univerſally believed, ſhould be inferred from what was univerſally ſeen: and ſuch as underſtand not thoſe metaphyſical notions, are apt to believe that there is a deſign to impoſe upon them.

But, ſince our curioſity muſt be always ſomewhat ſatisfied with arguments raiſed above ſenſe, I ſhall offer this one: It cannot be denied, but that there is ſomething in man that can compare two or more different things, ſuch as, Whether the pain of the head or the leg be greateſt? and that this cannot be done by any thing that is material, is very clear; for if ſo, it muſt be done by ſomething that touches at once both the things to be compared, and no material thing can do that in the ſame points; and if it be in different points, then it cannot judge of the

difference betwixt the two; for, they muſt be touched in one common point, elſe there can be no application of the material judge, to both, at the ſame time: and if this judgment muſt be made by ſomething in man that is immaterial, and ſo is able to extend its indiviſible ſelf to both the things to be compared; then it neceſſarily follows, that this muſt be a ſpirit; for there can be nothing immaterial but a ſpirit; and if we can once comprehend a ſpirit, we can never deny there is a God: for the hardeſt things that are objected againſt his being, are thoſe which ſtrike againſt the being of ſpirits in general.

Becauſe few or none are really diſtracted by this kind of madneſs, tho' they could wiſh they were, by ſmothering their reaſon with illuſions, that they may cover their crimes to themſelves, with the hopes of impunity, I haſten to another kind of unreaſonable men, who, tho' they acknowledge there is a God, do yet, by a deplorable negligence, little mind how to pleaſe and obey him. And that I may enforce upon my reader, the weakneſs of their reaſonings, I wiſh any of us would think, that if a ſociety of men were ſhipwrecked upon or ſent priſoners to an unknown iſle, were it not moſt unreaſonable for them, to ſit reading, diſcourſing, or gaming, and not to think who were maſters of that iſle, and how they might live in it; and if they learned that it belonged to a great prince who had

abſolute power of life and death, were it not unreaſonable, not to deſire to obtain his friendſhip? but much more to reject it, if he offered it with riches and preferment, upon no other condition, than that they would only attend at his court, love him, and not wrong one another? but this is our condition in a much ſtronger caſe; for we are here in a world created by God Almighty, in which he can kill and preſerve, not the body only, but the ſoul too; nor for ſome time only, but for ever; nor requires he any harder condition of us than that we would love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and our neighbours as our ſelves; which are ſo far from being hard leſſons, that one would think we could not but take great delight in them, tho' they were not preſcribed to us as our duty: for if a man be admired once for his great courage, conduct, or learning, who would not be pleaſed with being allowed to converſe with him? who amongſt us would not have taken pains to have been loved by Caeſar, as his friend, but more, as his ſon? but if Caeſar had been as expert a mathematician as he was a ſoldier, and could have burnt his enemies ſhips, like Archimedes; if he had invented gun-powder for his magazines, and found out the whole new world, as well as conquered a conſiderable part of the old: how much more would we yet have eſteemed him? and, to proceed further, if this Caeſar could either have ſaved his own life, by know-

ing the ſecrets of, or by killing alone all his aſſaſſinates, or prolonged for many hundreds of years that of his ſervants; we ſhould yet more have rejoiced in his ſervice and adoption: but what is all this to the infinite perfection of the great King of kings, whoſe ſervants, friends, nay and adopted ſons we may be? He it is who governed Caeſar, as he does the flies or ants, who, with one word made Caeſar and all the world, whereof he conquered only a part which he was not able to retain. By whoſe ſkill, the Heavens were ſtretched out, in which, vain Caeſar's greateſt ambition was to be a little ſtar: who not only knows, but, in one moment, governs all the various and almoſt infinite thoughts and deſigns of angels, men and devils; and who forces them all, how contrary ſoever to one another, to agree in the great deſigns he has in governing the world.

Who would not rejoice to ſerve a maſter, that knew when he were innocent, and who, as he is exactly juſt to his ſervants, ſo could not be impoſed upon by others, to their prejudice; and tho' even ſwarms of witneſſes combined againſt them, could ſee through the miſts that they threw up, which no earthly maſter, how juſt ſoever, can do? but ſuch is our heavenly Maſter, who can alſo not only enrich us when we are poor, and cure us when we are ſick; but can tame our paſſions, illuminate our ignorance, ſtrengthen our inclinations, ſweeten our tempers,

and make all theſe joys compleat, by the removal of all fears or jealouſies that can end or leſſen them. Can we give any reaſonable account, why we ſhould be careful to keep the road exactly, if we knew there were great precipices on every hand, into which whoever fell, were irrecoverable; and yet knowing, that, in our voyage to eternity, there are precipices that lead to dreadful pits of fire and brimſtone, kindled by the wrath of an angry God: we notwithſtanding, go on careleſly, laughing at ſuch as admoniſh us, and minding little trifles, which we are convinced will pleaſe no longer than we poſſeſs them.

How falſly do we reaſon, in reflecting on our ſelves and others? for we think them mad who endeavour not to get themſelves cured, when they find they are tormented with gout and gravel; yet who amongſt us is at any pains, ſo much as to ſeek remedies for his paſſions and vices, which of all other diſeaſes torment us moſt: and if we heard a fellow in livery, value himſelf upon the richneſs of his ſuit, would we not eſteem him an airy and fooliſh creature? but if we ſaw a man who were condemned, and going to the ſcaffold, admire himſelf, and talk of his power and glory, would we not conclude him diſtracted? and yet this is the true ſtate of a vain glorious monarch, who has nothing but what he has received from an infinite God, who can recal it when he pleaſes; and who, whilſt

he talks of his glory and greatneſs is by that God condemned to die, as irredeemably, as muſt the meaneſt ſlave, over whom he inſults. And ſince we would laugh at a vain coxcomb, who whilſt he were entertaining his friends in his maſter's houſe, as if it were his own, were taken out of it by the ears, and forced to tremble under the laſh; how ridiculous muſt we conclude Belſhazzar (and which is the caſe of too many other great men) who whilſt he was entertaining all his nobles, and boaſting of his independance, was ſeized by an irreſiſtible horror which ſhaked him all to pieces?

I doubt not for all this but learned men will think they may juſtly value themſelves on their own great parts and ſkill; and you may read long lectures made by them on this ſubject; but how unreaſonable are they in this, ſince theſe endowments are given them as external things are given to others? A ſchool-boy may more juſtly admire himſelf, becauſe he can repeat excellent lines made by another: or a man, becauſe the borrowed furniture, that he would make us believe to be his own, were within, and not without doors, or were finer than that borrowed ſtuff which another had, whom he deſpiſed. If two poor men ſhould borrow the one ten, and the other a thouſand pounds, the difference of the borrowed ſums ſhould not ceaſe to leave both of them equally poor. But he is really a wiſe and reaſonable man, who, knowing that what he has

is borrowed, endeavours not to boaſt of it as his own, but repays, as much as he can, the intereſt to the true owner for the loan. Let us then conclude this period with the Apoſtle's juſt reaſoning, 1 Cor. 4. 7. 'For who maketh thee to differ 'from another? and what haſt thou that thou 'didſt not receive? Now, if thou didſt receive it, 'why doſt thou glory as if thou hadſt not receiv'ed it?

Being once in company with a great wit, who ſeeing two poor chair-men ſweat in carrying a groſs corpulent vain fellow; he cried out, that he had rather be hanged than ſerve ſo meanly ſuch a rogue. Whereupon I told him he was doing a meaner thing, in bearing up the extravagancies of a violent and tyrannous ſtateſman, to pleaſe whoſe extravagant humour, I had ſeen him ſweat more than theſe poor men did; who had alſo in this the advantage of him, that they did ſo to get bread for their family, whereas he did the other to feed that ambition and avarice which tended to deſtroy himſelf.

Man's unreaſonableneſs appears further in not chuſing proper means to obtain the ends he propoſes to himſelf. Who would not think him a fool, who would endeavour to cure a mad dog by putting a golden collar about his neck? Or who would think to cure a fever in a man by beſtowing a great office on him? But are not men ſuch fools, when they think they can quiet their paſſions by riches, or their minds by ad-

vancement? Spiritual diſtempers are to be cured by ſpiritual means, and as the fineſt thoughts cannot feed the body, ſo neither can the greateſt riches, or any other external thing ſatisfie the immaterial ſoul!

If I were deſirous to get preferment, would not I endeavour to pleaſe him from whom I were to expect it, and not his enemies? but tho' we ſay that we expect, or at leaſt wiſh to be favourites to God Almighty, and to be by him happy for ever; yet we ſpend not our time in obeying him, but in ſerving openly and aſſiduouſly the world, the devil, and our own luſts, which are his declared enemies; and that too ſo reſolutely, that any reaſonable man cannot upon conſidering our actions, but conclude, That either we cared not for what he could give, or elſe that we were ſubtile enough to cheat him, or ſtrong enough to over-power him.

If a man were going to live in another country, would he not endeavour to accuſtom himſelf to the cuſtoms of it, and to carry with him things that were uſeful in that country? And would we not laugh at him, if he ſpent his time in building and adorning that inn which he were to leave? But this is our condition, who beſtow all our thoughts on the things of this world, from which we ſhould expect to remove every moment, and in which we cannot ſtay long.

It is moſt ſtrange that men, to ſecure themſelves againſt fortune, ſhould put themſelves

more and more into its power: for the remedies we uſe are to grow richer and greater, and nothing ſubjects us more to accidents than theſe do; for it is for theſe that men are purſued, and deſtroyed, and they are oftner crimes than defences.

God has promiſed, that 'if we ſeek we ſhall find, 'if we knock it ſhall be opened;' ſo that prayer is the true way to attain to what is deſireable: and men may pray ſecurely at their own bed-ſide, or in walking about their own field. But yet men will leave this ſure, ſafe, and eaſie way; and ſail to the Indies amidſt ſtorms, and travel through the deſarts of Arabia amongſt thieves, to get unneceſſary riches; expoſe themſelves to cannons, and watch in camps to get honours, truſting the ſeas, winds, and cannons more than their own kind and merciful Father, who made and governs all theſe.

When we have children, we are very deſirous to leave them well ſecured, and conſequently provide them eſtates; but tho' we take pains to breed our colts, and hawks, we take no pains in teaching our children their duty to their maſter, as we do thoſe beaſts; and probably by not being bred to a juſt way of reaſoning, they may loſe by one extravagance all that we have left them, or at leaſt live unhappily in not knowing how to uſe it aright. And the ſame parents which would beſtow their eſtates to free their children from burning for a month in a fever, will, to get them a little addition to that ſame ſtate,

breed them ſo, as may occaſion their burning to all eternity.

If any man were guilty of crimes, and ſo needed the king's pardon, would we not think him a meer brute, if he ſhould inſtead of ſeeking it earneſtly and ſincerely, run up and down railing at him, and reviling his laws? Yet moſt of our wits, who have indeed more guilt than wit, and are not ſure what moment they ſhall be damned for ever, make it their buſineſs, rather than ſport, to treat in ridicule his Divine Majeſty and laws.

Let us a little examine the unreaſonableneſs of mens arguing in matters of honour, wherein they pretend to be ſo exact, and delicate, and we ſhall be convinced how weak their reaſon is.

And in the firſt place, would not right reaſon dictate to us, that thoſe things are fitteſt for men of honour, which are moſt approved and recommended by that judge whom all acknowledge to underſtand beſt what is great, glorious, and juſt? who would believe any thing to be honourable for a ſoldier, which Caeſar or mareſchal Turenne had condemned as unjuſt and mean? and if this rule hold, we muſt conclude, That it is the Almighty God, the glorious maker of heaven and earth, and of the heart of man, and not the inſolent courtier, the huffing hector, or the unſtable and ignorant rabble, who muſt give the rules to juſt honour and true grandeur. Nor ſhould the beſt of moral men be able to perſuade us, that any thing is honourable, but according

as it agrees with the revealed will of that omnipotent and infallible judge; for if he be infallible, it is ridiculous that his judgment ſhould not be acquieſced in; and if we think him not infallible, we cannot think he is God.

If any man ſhould call one perjured, eſpecially if he were a perſon of quality, he would reſent it irreconcileably; and yet are not all ſuch as are guilty of adultery, guilty of perjury? and to aggravate this perjury, it is perjury againſt a lady, to injure whom, and to whom the breach of an ordinary promiſe would be thought a ſhameful crime; but yet much more, when it is conſidered, that upon that oath the lady had delivered herſelf up, and by the like oath had forſaken all the reſt of mankind: ſo then, if perjury be a villainy, when committed in the moſt trivial things, and to a perſon who never obliged us; what can it then be, when committed in the greateſt concern, and when the oath was given in the moſt conſiderate manner, and under the greateſt obligation to the moſt deſerving perſon, and to one of that delicate ſex, which the moſt unworthy are unwilling to injure or cheat?

I doubt not, but all who pretend to reaſon, will acknowledge, that ingratitude is the moſt abominable of all vices, and moſt inconſiſtent with true honour. And if a prince had obliged one of his ſubjects, behaving himſelf as a kind father to him, would he not be a very rogue if he were ungrateful; but yet more, if he refuſed

to obey him, after many promiſes and vows, nay, and after many pardons, having ſeveral times relapſed again and again into thoſe crimes, and even employed the forces, with which the king had truſted him, againſt himſelf? and yet the King of kings, and our heavenly Father, having heaped hourly ſuch favours on us, that it needs a man's whole time to repeat them, becauſe every moment of our time makes a part of them, we ungrateful miſcreants employ all the ſtrength of our ſpirits and bodies in offending him daily, to that height, that tho' we ourſelves tremble when we think with confuſion upon them, and vow againſt, and mourn for them; yet we reaſonable men return with the dog to the vomit, and with the ſow to the puddle, and add the breach of our new vows to our old ſins.

I know that pride has formed for its own defence a body of law called point of honour; as one inſtance whereof, amongſt others, I urge how unreaſonably men repair their honour, in endeavouring to take a man's life for a word, damning both themſelves and him, and by way of compliment drawing innocent men (and ſuch ordinarily as have the greateſt kindneſs for them) into the ſame hazard and condemnation; which in ſpight of all the gallantry imaginable, does prove how little uſe of true reaſon men have, tho' they value themſelves very much, as if they were the ſole maſters of it. For this is not only contrary to the law of God, the true fountain of

honour, as of all good, but to the laws of our country: and what can be more abſurd, than that ſome private, young, and ranting hectors ſhould be able to make that paſs for generous and gallant, which whole nations aſſembled have after much reaſoning and deliberation condemned as a crime in all ages and countries; and even the ſame men, who boaſt of this when enraged, and in the field, condemn it in parliament and in cold blood? But nothing diſcredits this heroiſm more, than that thoſe, who would not yield up their revenge to God, nor their conſcience, have been frighted from it by the French king and the gallows.

If one man give another the lie, he muſt pay down his life, becauſe a man of honour would rather chuſe to die than to be a liar, or rather thought one; but this man of honour will flatter, till all men laugh at him for lying ſo groſly; and this eloquence of knaves muſt likewiſe make his patron a fool, for being capable to believe what none believes, ſave himſelf; ſo that this flatterer, who yet paſſes for a man of true honour, makes himſelf a liar, and his patron a fool. How oftentimes alſo have we ſeen theſe men of honour lie and flatter, to promote faction, and to pleaſe the multitude, which they were thereby deſigning to cheat, as if the addition of a cheat could make a lie honourable. Rebellion and pimping are noble flights of glory and kindneſs, to which, faſhionable men, and men of honour

can only pretend, and a prerogative denied to thoſe men who are truely virtuous. If men, who are tender of their reputation, were reaſonable, would they not conſider, that all theſe their crimes and vices are known to that great God, who is the fountain of truth, and the rule of purity, and ſhall, at the great day be known to men and angels? If a lady conſidered, that all her unchaſt thoughts, and a perſon who paſſes for an honeſt man, that all his ſecrets and cheats would be diſcovered to their neighbours, though as guilty as they, it would confound them: how then will all men look, when the ſins they are endeavouring to cover, ſhall be laid open in that illuſtrious aſſembly, where innocence and knowledge ſhall be in ſuch high perfection? How can we then be judged reaſonable creatures, when we dare do that before the Almighty God, who is of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity, which we durſt not attempt before our own ſervants, who depend on us, and are as frail as our ſelves? And if we cannot abide the accuſation of our own conſcience, how ſhall we be able to hold up our faces in ſo glorious a judicature? And can men be reaſonable creatures, and yet not mind ſo great a concern?

Fame, that tacite acknowledgment of immortality, even in thoſe who believe it not, is purſued ſo extravagantly, that idolatry itſelf is not more inexcuſable: for, to gain the opinion of a brutal multitude, we ſacrifice to them our duty,

our quiet and our ſecurity; and what deſign can we have, or return can we expect for all this? For if we be not immortal, what ſignifies our being eſteemed, when we are to have no being? And why ſhould we give ourſelves real trouble for an imaginary good? And if we believe the Chriſtian religion, it teaches us, that either we muſt be ſaved or damned; if ſaved, fame from men will ſignifie nothing, when we diſcover how fooliſh we were to adore ſuch worms; if damned, that which made a great part of our crime, cannot be an alleviation of its puniſhment. But if a man, believing there is a God, did argue juſtly, he would value highly the being eſteemed by that wiſdom that cannot err, and whoſe ſuffrage will laſt to all eternity. Men can only raiſe our character, without being able to raiſe our merit, but our great maſter can really make us merit, and open the eyes of others to underſtand it, when true, which no man can do, and his eſteem brings rewards, ſuitable to its greatneſs; and therefore is only worthy of our pains, eſpecially, if we beſtowed that pains in ſerving him, which we do in gaining fame; we might expect from his goodneſs what can never be valuable when obtained from men, becauſe of their meanneſs; or ſecure, becauſe of their injuſtice or caprice. If we ſaw any of our acquaintance running up and down among mean and ignorant people, to perſuade them to praiſe and admire him, we would laugh at his folly, as well as va-

nity; but this is the condition of us poor blind ſinners, who are ſick and dejected, if our ſilly, blind fellow-mortals do not admire us, and praiſe our actions.

I have remarked in my own time, that ſome, by taking too much care to be eſteemed and admired, have by that courſe miſſed their aim, whilſt others of them, who ſhunned it, did meet with it, as if it had fallen on them, whilſt it was flying from the others; which proceeded from the unfit means theſe able and reaſonable men took to eſtabliſh their reputation. It is very ſtrange to hear men value themſelves upon their honour, and their being men of their word in trifles, when yet that ſame honour cannot tie them to pay the debts they have contracted upon ſolemn promiſes, of ſecure and ſpeedy repayment, ſtarving poor widows and orphans, to feed their luſts; and adding thus, robbery and oppreſſion to the diſhonourable breach of truſt: and how can we think them men of honour, who, when a potent and foreign monarch is oppreſſing his weaker neighbour, hazard their very lives to aſſiſt him, tho' they would rail at any of their acquaintance, that, meeting a ſtrong man fighting with a weaker, ſhould aſſiſt the ſtronger in his oppreſſion.

The ſureſt and moſt pleaſant path to univerſal eſteem, and true popularity, is to be juſt; for all men eſteem him moſt, who ſecures moſt their private intereſt, and protects beſt their inno-

cence; and all who have any notion of a Deity, believe that juſtice is one of his chief attributes; and that therefore, whoever is juſt, is next in nature to him, and the beſt picture of him; and to be reverenced and loved: but yet, how few trace this path, moſt men chuſing rather to toil and vex themſelves, in ſeeking popular applauſe, by living high, and in profuſe prodigalities, which are entertained by injuſtice and oppreſſion, as if rational men would pardon robbers, becauſe they feaſted them upon a part of their own ſpoils; or did let them ſee fine and glorious ſhows, made for the honour of the giver, upon the expence of the robbed ſpectators. But when a virtuous perſon appears great by his merit, and obeyed only by the charming force of his reaſon, all men think him deſcended from that heaven which he ſerves, and to him they gladly pay the noble tribute of deſerved praiſes.

Another great claſs of arguments, to prove how ill men reaſon in matters of greateſt importance, may be brought from the contradictions we are guilty of in our conduct. As for inſtance, life is the thing in the world moſt valued, for without it, we can enjoy nothing; and yet, ſo unreaſonable are we, that for a compliment, we will hazard it ſo far, as may be rather called a loſing of it. When time is going, we cry out againſt providence, for having made it ſo ſhort, and when it is gone, we would give all the world to redeem it; and yet we are weary of it ſo far

as to beſtow money upon any thing that will help to ſpend it; and give it away in viſits, to ſuch, to whom we would not give any thing elſe. We would for no money quit one year of our life; and yet for the ſame money, which we ſo undervalue in the expreſs exchange, moſt men do really give away very many of their beſt years, ſince they are ſpent in gaining money.

We exclaim againſt tyranny, uſurpation and oppreſſion, and in this we are much in the right: but why then do we admire, and cry up ſuch as have been great oppreſſors and uſurpers, as Alexander, Caeſar? for in this, we are not only unjuſt upon the matter, but enemies to ourſelves; for that eſteem we put upon them who have been ſuch, invites others to make us the prey of our own errors.

Moſt men do admire, and preſer themſelves to all others, which is a great proof of our unreaſonableneſs; but yet, even theſe cannot ſtay with themſelves, and by being afraid to look into their own hearts, contradict the eſteem which yet at all times they have for themſelves, to an unſufferable exceſs. All men deſire to prefer the beſt company; and when men prefer any company to the being alone, they demonſtrate that themſelves are not the beſt. Moſt men, when they are young, contemn riches, and love them when they are old; and though our wits ſcorn to think, or ſay with the vulgar, yet even theſe are ſwayed as much, and as ſtrongly by vulgar

vices, as thoſe who never exclaimed againſt the unthinking crowd. All creatures ſtand in awe of others, according to the eſteem they have of them; and tho' we admire our own perfections, and value ourſelves far above our proportion, yet ſtand we not in awe to commit wickedneſs when alone, which we durſt not commit if others were preſent; and thus we are ſo unreaſonable, that we want a due reverence and eſteem for our ſelves, where we ought to have it, and have it exceſſively where we ought to want it totally.

Self-love, the falſeſt tho' the ſubtileſt of all reaſoners, endeavours to perſuade us, that in revenge, we ſhall, by ſeeing our enemies ruined, remain ourſelves the more excellent creatures, our rivals being thus depreſſed: and this is that hid reaſon which juſtifies to us that paſſion which is truly moſt inhuman. But what an improper argument is this, for we are not one whit the more excellent, that another is ruined by an accident. Another argument brought by revenge, is, that thus we ſhall ſecure ourſelves againſt our enemies, and ſo revenge would paſs with us under the diſguiſe of ſelf-defence; but becauſe this would ſeem cowardly, and be, in effect, a tacite acknowledgment of fear; we rather ſay, that in revenge, we will teach others not to attack us. But all theſe are falſe reaſonings; for no man ſecures his true quiet by revenge, for it raiſes an enemy within, which is always preſent, and able to diſquiet: nay all men think themſelves o-

bliged to deſtroy the revengeful man, by the ſame argument that he purſues his revenge; and thus a man is tortured by it till it be ſatisfied, and frighted by it after he has prevailed.

Moſt men deſire to be in employment, from a ſecret deſire to be admired; whereas when they are in employments, they do not thoſe juſt and virtuous things, for which they would be truly admired: and altho' ſelf-love makes them believe, that the being feared is a mark of true dominion; yet they conſider not, that even dominion is only at the bottom deſireable, becauſe it is a ſign of merit and innate excellency; and does pleaſe, becauſe it makes us believe, by the ſuffrage of others, that we are noble and excellent perſons, of which even the leaſt reaſonable cannot ſeriouſly be perſwaded, except they believe they have done virtuous things. And thus it were more reaſonable to do what is really virtuous, than to cheat ourſelves, with thinking that others admire us. And it is very unreaſonable not to do things rather for virtue itſelf, than for the applauſe which follows it, ſince that applauſe derives its deſireableneſs from virtue, and ſo virtue itſelf ſhould be much more deſired: and which ſhews yet more the weakneſs of our reaſon, tho' in this we contradict the undeniable ſentiments of mankind, yet we are cheated into it by a miſtake, as if it were eaſier to attain to the applauſe of virtue, than to virtue itſelf; whereas, quite contrary, it muſt be more difficult to attain

applauſe, ſince it depends upon many thouſands of rivals and capricious fools; whereas virtue ſprings from a man's own breaſt, and we may have it, and keep it in ſpight of all mankind.

Every man alſo, may in his private ſtation and employment, find thouſands of inſtances to confirm this truth. And thus a courtier ſhould conſider, that when he ſees his prince bow and pray to a ſuperior, before whom he acknowledges himſelf to be a worm and a vapour, that certainly it is fit to do nothing to diſpleaſe that ſuperior power, for gaining the favour of that prince who adores him; and who would not think him mad, who would ſcorn to depend on a monarch, but would take pains to flatter his footman? When a lawyer obſerves that men take ſuch pains to ſecure in law an intereſt that cannot be ſecured againſt accidents, he ſhould in reaſon conclude, that it is brutiſh not to take more pains to ſecure that which ſhall never fail: and when he obſerves how zealouſly the eldeſt men defend a life, that accidents, nay, and nature probably will end with the proceſs, ſhould he not conſider, what pains ſhould be taken to ſecure a life that continues for ever, free too from that care, and thoſe ſickneſſes, that even before death make this life miſerable.

If a ſoldier who were beſieged by his enemies, ſhould abandon his watch, and ſpend his time in gaming and drinking, or ſhould loſe the glorious opportunity of defeating them, for a feaſt;

or, as Mark Anthony, for a miſtreſs: eſpecially, if they be ſuch enemies, whom we know, would not only kill, but torment us to death, were he not to be accounted a fool? But that is our caſe; for being ſurrounded with temptations and devils, we ſpend our time in toys and trifles, and whilſt we hear that others have received an immortal crown, for having overcome their ſpiritual enemies, we who value fame and glory ſo much, ſpend our time in pleaſing two or three ſilly courtiers, whom we deſpiſe whilſt we attend them, and laugh at the actions which we ſeem to admire. A merchant were ridiculous, if he ſhould ſpend his ſtock and his time in buying up wares that were unfaſhionable in that country where he has his abode; and yet moſt men employ themſelves wholly in gathering riches, and getting that knowledge, which can neither be carried to heaven with them, nor can comfort them when they are in hell. And I have oft applauded the remark of a gentlewoman, who hearing a whole ſociety admire one of her acquaintance, for a great wit, told them, that his father had let him a great eſtate, which he had ſpent amongſt whores, that he had himſelf married a whore, and had changed the orthodox religion, in which he was bred up, for a worſe, and was not devout in that neither; and deſired them to conſider if that man deſerved to be called a wit?

Nor are we only unreaſonable in purſuing our

pleaſures and vices; but the very meaſures we take in being virtuous, ſhew how weak our reaſon is, and how ill we uſe it. For our friendſhip is for the moſt part but the preferring thoſe for whom we have a kindneſs, to thoſe who deſerve better both our kindneſs and thoſe employments; and thus we rob the commonwealth, to repay the debt our gratitude owes. The courage of many is but a hypocritical diſguiſing of their fear, or a dull ignorance of their danger. For when a man goes to battle, he fears to die; but to diſguiſe this fear, he conſiders the ſhame of flying, and knowing certainly that his reputation would be ruined, he fears more this certain loſs, than the hazard of being killed: but if he cannot attain to that, he at leaſt braves it out, and endeavours to cheat others, when he cannot ſatisfie himſelf.

Liberality and charity are oft-times but the diſguiſed effects of vanity, wherein men tacitely deſign rather their own perpetuity, than the advantage of thoſe on whom they beſtow what is given, in which they act very unreaſonably: for if they lent it to God, he would reſtore it with a very enriching intereſt: but in beſtowing it on fame, they beſtow it on a cheat, which has oft deceived both them and others. And it ſtill ſeems ſtrange, that we will beſtow it on that multitude (for fame and the multitude are the ſame thing) to preſerve any one of whom from ſtarving, we would not beſtow one farthing. And yet the

world eſteem thoſe who do ſuch things more than they do reaſonable and judicious perſons.

It is one of the chief and fundamental dictates of reaſon, that we ſhould do to others as we would wiſh them to do to us. But tho' we exclaim againſt our equals, poor mortals, if they refuſe us this meaſure, yet we allow it not to our great king and ſovereign. If we heard that any who pretended to be our friend, did ſit tamely and hear us railed at, and contemned, we would conclude them baſe and treacherous; and a king would for this treat his ſubjects as rebels; but yet we ſit not only to hear impious creatures rail at religion, and oft-times at providence itſelf, with ſo little reſentment, that we comply and even admire the miſcreant. I remember that I ſuggeſted once to a perſon of quality, who was buſie about his accounts, to conſider if our ſteward ſhould ſpend our rents upon his own affairs, or upon maintaining his own family or luxury, and much more if he ſhould riot it away with our enemies, would we not hate him as a rogue, and at leaſt recal the truſt we gave him. But the great maſter of the family of the faithful having appointed us only to be ſtewards, not to appropriate, but to beſtow the eſtates he gave us for the uſe of his poor children and ſervants, preferring us kindly to as much as may ſatisfie our conveniency, for ſo the ſcripture, and even reaſon itſelf, teaches us: (for why ſhould the wiſe God have beſtowed ſo much upon ſome, whilſt

others want, if he had not deſigned to level all by this neceſſity of diſtribution) yet we ſee his children ſtarve, whilſt we employ the portions due to them upon the wicked who are his enemies. And thus we uſe the Almighty God at the rate we would not ſuffer from the meaneſt of our ſervants. And ſo unreaſonable are even ſuch as are convinced of the reaſonableneſs of charity, that by doing their charitable actions in public, they loſe the reward, by not preſerving the true deſign of it; for as our Saviour argues, Matth. 6. 4. 'It is very juſt, that ſince they beſtow their 'charity to gain the applauſe of men, they ſhould 'be rewarded with the applauſe for which they 'beſtowed it;' And how can they expect a reward from God, to pleaſe whom it was not given; and he is not obliged to repay what was not lent him: and they cannot expect double payment, for being paid by men, the obligation is fully ſatisfied.

I ſhall conclude theſe obſervations with what ordinarily we conclude our unreaſonable lives, and that is death-bed repentance, which of all things is the moſt unreaſonable. For if we believe the rewards and torments which attend our future ſtate, and make the delay ſo dangerous, why delay we? And if we believe neither of theſe, why repent we? The one cannot but make our preſent pleaſures very bitter, by the fear that muſt thereupon haunt us; and the other cannot but needleſly cut off the pleaſures which

we exclude as inconſiſtent with true repentance. But which of us being condemned to horrible torments, would delay to ſeek a remiſſion till the laſt hour? or being invited to leave our cottage to receive a plentiful eſtate, would delay to undertake his journey? and yet we eaſily delay our repentance, which can only preſerve us, condemned ſinners, from eternal torments; and which would certainly bring us, poor wretches, to that inheritance of immortal glory. And tho' we condemn ourſelves for leaving the diſpatch of our little concerns till the laſt hour, yet we delay that great and neceſſary work, on which a long eternity hangs, for every trifle. And that which aggravates much this neglect, is, that the reaſons which encourage us to it are as weak, as the thing itſelf is abſurd and dangerous. For the hope we may live, has for its foundation a frail body, that every accident can deſtroy; and it is a wonder, that when we hear of ſo many unexpected deaths, we ſhould not tremble to think, what if I had died? And tho' the mercy of God be as infinite as his juſtice, yet it is inſupportable inſolence in us to think, that we can be ſaved when we pleaſe: this is not only to undervalue him as the laſt thing to be choſen, which implies that our infinitely glorious Maker is of all things leaſt worthy of our choice, but in this we exalt ourſelves above him, as if we might command him to beſtow upon us heaven and happineſs whenever we thought fit to call for it. And

which of us would beſtow the meaneſt favour upon him, who would reſolve to oppoſe, or but neglect us as long as he pleaſed. The delaying makes us the unfitter, not only to crave, but even to receive, mercy; and ſince all our life, altho' as piouſly ſpent as human frailty can allow, is ſhort enough for ſo great a work; what can we expect from a few ſickly hours diſtracted by new pains, and amazed at ſo many old ſins? And the ſcripture having commanded us to repent, and bring forth good works; it has every where made good works and a ſubſequent amendment of our lives, the mark as well as fruit of ſincere repentance: and therefore ſince a death-bed repentance muſt want this proof, it cannot but be by ſo much the more uncomfortable to us and our friends. Nor is there any generous ſoul, who having received ſo great and undeſerved a pardon, would not deſire to be able to live, that he might magnifie that infinite God to whom he owed it. I know that the thief on the croſs has been a ſtumbling block to many others; but we reaſon very weakly from this inſtance of God's mercy: for he by believing the divinity of our Saviour amidſt all that could have been ſaid againſt it, when even the Jews were deſiring him to come down from the croſs, and they would believe in him; and the other thief was reviling him; did evidence as much faith in that contracted ſpan when dying, as the beſt of us can do in a prolonged life. And it being fit for the Saviour

of the world to ſhew his power and mercy when he was leading captivity captive, that happy thief can be no precedent for us who remain unconverted after ſo many miracles, that no reaſonable man can now doubt of, eſpecially if he never heard, as it is probable, of that goſpel which we have ſo oft undervalued, and if he has not neglected former offers of mercy which we have ſo oft contemned. And ſhall we preſume on God's goodneſs, becauſe one man was ſaved, and but one, to preſerve mankind from deſpair; not remembring, that as the thief obtained a pardon when he ſought it, ſo Eſau found no place for repentance, tho' he ſought it earneſtly, Heb. 12. 17? And tho' thoſe who came in at the laſt hour, got as much as thoſe who had wrought at the firſt; yet it is remarkable, that it is ſaid, they came not ſooner, becauſe no man had deſired them. But let me conjure any noble ſoul to conſider, that if God be worthy of the adoration of angels through all eternity; and that we confeſs, that to walk, like Enoch, with him, will be ſo amiable and glorious, why ſhould we delay it for pleaſures that are unworthy of a reaſonable ſoul, and which laſt but for a moment? For at leaſt we loſe ſo much unexpreſſible joy and pleaſure; and in delaying our repentance we continue to be ſick when we may be whole, to be blind when we may ſee, to be poor when we may be rich, to lie in priſon when we may live at liberty, and to be ſlaves to our enemies when we may be heirs to a

kingdom. All which induce me to believe, that they who delay repentance, deſign not to repent, but flatter themſelves with a falſe conceit of it; for to repent is to be grieved, and no man who is grieved, can put it off at his pleaſure, no more than a man can be grieved or not as he pleaſes. As alſo if a man reſolved ſincerely to repent, it is neceſſary that he were convinced of the greatneſs of his danger, and were actually aſhamed as well as afraid thereof; and if he were truly touched with theſe convictions, he would not continue in the courſes which occaſioned them. And to finiſh all, is it not the height of unreaſonableneſs for a man to continue to do theſe things, of which he knows he muſt be aſhamed, and for which he reſolves to be exceedingly troubled and afflicted? And if we were coming into a room where a man were wounding himſelf, would we not conclude him yet madder if he told us, that he would give himſelf more and more, becauſe ſuch a man got ſo many wounds, and yet was cured?

Let me therefore conclude this diſcourſe with the noble and juſt reaſoning uſed by St. Peter, 2 epiſt. 3. 10, 11. 'But the day of the Lord will 'come as a thief in the night, in the which the 'heavens will paſs away with a great noiſe, and 'the elements ſhall melt with a fervent heat, the 'earth alſo and the works that are therein ſhall 'be burnt up: ſeeing then that all theſe things 'ſhall be diſſolved, what manner of perſons ought

'ye to be in all holy converſation and Godli-'neſs?

And what a frighted creature will the greateſt hero be, when he finds himſelf in the midſt of a burning world, having greater terrors within his breaſt than theſe raiſed by an omnipotent God, and which will force him to cry to the hills and mountains to fall upon him, and cover him from the face of this angry judge?

But theſe great and ſad truths need (alas) to be preached by an angel, to hearers ſtanding upon the brink of their grave, and having heaven and hell opened before them.

AN

ESSAY ON REASON.

PART II.

WHENCE PROCEEDS IT THAT MAN IS SO UNREASONABLE, AND HOW TO IMPROVE OUR REASON.

IT is indeed very ſtrange, that man, who improves daily ſo much in all arts and ſciences, that are neither ſo neceſſary, ſo eaſie, nor ſo advantageous to us, ſhould ſtill decreaſe in this excellent ſtudy, this noble and uſeful knowledge: let us then enquire a little into the occaſions of theſe errors in his reaſonings, and we ſhall find them ſo ſilly, that they alſo diſcover to us new weakneſſes in his reaſon.

I know that we generally charge this on man's atheiſm, imagining he would reaſon juſtly, if he believed the principles I have laid down; but this is a miſtake, for atheiſts reaſon moſt weakly, as well as others, and moſt inconſequentially to their own principles; for even atheiſts diſquiet themſelves for fame and money, and by whoring and drinking deſtroy their bodies, which is all

they dote upon, and ſhould preſerve, and which ſhews their unreaſonableneſs, according to their own principles; and that infidelity is not the cauſe of falſe reaſoning, appears clearly, becauſe ſuch as are not atheiſts, reaſon falſly; and we may obſerve, that ſuch as believe that by the ill diets they uſe, their terrible pains will be renewed do yet adventure on them; oh, that they only of all mankind were the unreaſonable men! But how unreaſonable are they, who believing there is a crown of glory reſerved for thoſe that will run that heavenly race, chuſe rather to ſit tipling and gaming; that believe the Son of God ſtands ſtretching out his arms, ready to preſerve them, and yet will rather ſink down into that fearful pit, from which there is no redemption; who will rather ſtarve than ſeek that heavenly manna, and languiſh of their wounds, than ſeek the balm of Gilead, from the hand of a loving father; whom no judgments on others can awaken, nor mercies to themſelves can oblige; ſick, amidſt ſo many cures; poor, amidſt ſuch plenty; blind, notwithſtanding ſo much light; and inſenſible, in ſpight of ſo many convictions?

But how can men reaſon well, ſince they neither underſtand the true uſe of reaſon, nor what man is? And theſe are the two firſt and great occaſions of our errors.

As to reaſon, let us examine ourſelves narrowly, and we ſhall find that men think they need not reaſon in the great and conſiderable

deſigns of life, as if theſe were matters to be taken upon truſt; and as if reaſon were to be uſed only if matters on ſtate, or in debate or trade. And a deſire to know, who ſits down to reaſon with himſelf, why he lives ſo or ſo, or to know, if what he does, is according to the rules given him, for regulating his actions. I have myſelf ſpent twenty years in reaſoning eagerly to ſecure other mens eſtates; but I have ſpent very little time to conſider, by a nobler reaſoning, why do I ſpend ſo much time in reaſoning for other men, and yet ſo little for myſelf? tho' in the mean time, I do but too much prefer myſelf to all others? You will find ſome divines very buſie in arguing, whether God from all eternity could have made creatures, and yet theſe men will never conſider what ſhall become of them in eternity. The cure then of this, is to conſider reaſon, not as a tool, uſeful for gain or fame only, but as a ſquare, put in our hands, by our kind God, to inſtruct us how to make our actions ſtraight and even; and as a workman does firſt mind to have all regulated by his ſquare and after his work is finiſhed, applys the ſquare, to what he has made; ſo ought we, when any thing is deſigned by us, reſolve to do all in it by the rules of reaſon, and when the action is ended, examine if it be ſo: and to invite us to this, God has not obliged us to ſeek for this any foreign or remote remedy; no, nor to owe our remedy to any other; but has placed his candle in our breaſts,

and honoured us with the being our own governours and directors. Let us then think, and think of matters of importance, and of matters that import us; let us think as much of heaven, which cannot be taken from us, when once we are poſſeſſed of it, as we do of temporal eſtates, in the poſſeſſion of which we cannot be ſecured. Let us think as much upon our ſelves, whom we value too much, as upon others, whom we value too little.

We uſe oft-times our reaſon to argue falſly for intereſt, or by pre-ingagement, and this debauches our reaſon, after which it continues eaſily in this error: for this takes off that reverence and eſteem we ought to have for juſt reaſoning. Thus lawyers favouring ſtill, and being obliged to maintain the cauſe of thoſe who have retained them, force their reaſon to find arguments for their own ſide; divines thinking themſelves obliged to defend the poſitions of that church wherein they were born, reaſon ſtill in its defence: ſtates-men, to fortifie their partie, endeavour to perſuade all men to embrace it; and orators, not excepting the philoſophers amongſt them, to beautifie their diſcourſes, urge things that are meer flouriſhes, having much luſtre, but no ſtrength; great inſtances whereof are to be ſeen in Seneca, and generally in all the heathens, who, as I ſhall ſhew expreſly elſewhere, were forced, by not knowing the true principles whereupon reaſon was to be built, to maintain by falſe

reaſonings the true principles that they deſigned to recommend. We do likewiſe form our morality by our intereſt, and guide not our intereſt by our morals; and after we have formed any deſign, we find out reaſons to perſuade us that it is juſt: and thus we oft-times miſtake intereſt, imagination, and prejudices, for ſolid reaſon; the true cure whereof lies in being painful and curious in our firſt reaſonings; and as careful not to commit errors by falſe and careleſs arguings, in matters of eternal happineſs, as mathematicians are in their demonſtrations about figures and concluſions which cannot ſecure them againſt one misfortune, nor add one day to their lives.

Bigotry, and falſe conceptions of religion, do alſo darken much our reaſon; for ſometimes, by implicit faith and infallibility, (thoſe great tyrants over reaſon) we accuſtom ourſelves to lazineſs, wherein we loſe the habit of reaſoning; and ſometimes by impoſing upon us things inconſiſtent with it, and by teaching us that it is a dangerous guide, we leſſen our own eſteem for it, and create inſenſibly in ourſelves a jealouſie that it is an impoſture; and we baffle it ſo on theſe occaſions that at other times it dares not try its own ſtrength. I confeſs, that it ought in a juſt ſubmiſſion yield to his commands who made it, nor ſhould we hear the ſervant when the maſter ſpeaks; but except when the will of God does expreſly ordain one's reaſon to ſubmit, we ought not to deny ourſelves the true exerciſe

of it, to pleaſe men, who underſtand not its true ſtrength, or do upon deſigns impoſe on us the abandoning of it. And this has infected us ſo far, that by it all other ſciences did fall very low. And if ſome bold defender, ſuch as Cartes and others had not interpoſed, we had been led by implicit faith, in all the objects of knowledge as well as in all the objects of faith; and every ſchool-man would have exacted as much abſolute ſubmiſſion to his own dictates as we ſhould pay to the unerring commands of our infallible Creator. And oft-times ſelf-love paſſing for religion, blinds us whilſt it promiſes illumination: as a clear inſtance whereof I ſhall deſire any wiſe man to conſider, that if this were true zeal which led men to hazard all they have for the ridiculous difference about indifferent ceremonies or tenets, why do they not hazard all they poſſeſs for the defence of the Chriſtian religion againſt the Turks; ſince in ſound reaſon, and by a mathematical certainty, the whole is to be preferred to a part; and to prove that this is the effect of ſelf-love, and not of true devotion, it is very obſervable, that the leſs the differences be in ſuch caſes, we are ordinarily the more paſſionate in them, being inclined rather to have our ſentiments ſuſtained; than the commands of God obeyed; moſt men being to themſelves their own only God, and being aſhamed that they ſhould err even in the meaneſt circumſtance.

Men may think me inſolent when I tell them that they underſtand not themſelves, but they ſhould bear this from me, who would willingly wiſh that they could juſtly tax me of a lie in it. But for my ſecurity I muſt put them in mind, that monſieur Paſchal told them before me, that he had laid aſide the ſtudy of the mathematics, becauſe few underſtood to converſe with him, in it, and betook himſelf to conſider man; as thinking that a ſubject ſo near, and of ſuch concern to every one, that all could not but underſtand it; and yet he found this leſs underſtood than the other. But that I may contribute my mean endeavours for clearing them in this, I muſt deſire them to conſider, that man being created to love and admire God, it muſt follow by a neceſſary conſequence, that God was to be the center of all his knowledge; and right reaſon was a drawing of all his concluſions as ſo many lines, to reſt upon God as that center. But man deſigning to exalt himſelf, does by a woful miſtake make himſelf the center, and ſelf-love, as another reaſon, draws all into this deſign. And thus, whereas we ſhould ſtudy to underſtand the excellent works of the creation, that in them we may underſtand the infiniteneſs of that wonderful Creator; we ſtudy them only thereby to adorn our own ſpirits, and thus to raiſe an eſteem in others for us: and crook in all the concluſions we make to ourſelves and our conveniency, as the center of all our de-

ſigns. And thus we have invented new ſciences, arts, and recreations, ſuch as criticiſms, raillery, comedies, tragedies, *&c.* meerly that our works may be admired as much as his. And therefore it is impoſſible we can ever reaſon juſtly, ſince all the lines of our reaſoning tend to a wrong center; but if we return to our duty in reſolving to love and admire him, and not ourſelves, every concluſion being drawn from true principles and poſitions, would recover its original ſtraightneſs. And thus if we adored God more than kings and princes, we would not diſpleaſe God to pleaſe them, that we might be enriched or advanced by them. If we ſtudied only to know him in his creatures, and not to raiſe our own fame by them, we would not toil and vex ourſelves to acquire fame; nor forget ſerving and adoring him, that we might get time to know thoſe ſciences, and be eſteemed for, and delighted in that learning. Self-love, amongſt its other cheats, hinders us to ſtudy Chriſtian morality, becauſe that would let us ſee how vile and frail we are; and therefore, as a diverſion, it carries us impetuouſly to ſtudy other ſciences, wherein we may admire our own wit and ſagacity: but that which ſeems to me the true notion of learning is, that it ſhould be a deſign to know and admire God in his works; for which natural philoſophy and mathematics are to be ſtudied; in his providence, which we may know by hiſtory; in his juſtice, to be known by law; and in his governing the

ſoul of man, which is the object of moral philoſophy: but above all, in himſelf and the myſteries of our ſalvation, taught by divinity when well directed.

A proof of which, as well as a new cauſe of our errors and reaſoning, is, That the firſt rule by which our reaſons are ſquared and directed, are the writings of thoſe illuſtrious heathens, who in our youth are recommended to us as the only guides and patterns: the beſt of which, ſuch as Plato, Epictetus, Seneca, and others, being abſolutely ignorant of man's great diſeaſe, which is original ſin, could not but miſtake the remedies of his actual tranſgreſſions, and knowing nothing more excellent than their own reaſon, they concluded it was ſufficient. And having from their poets and traditions learned mean, low thoughts of their gods, who were in thoſe days made the chief actors of the ſins they ſhould have puniſhed, and deſcribed as more employed in ſatisfying their own paſſions, than in governing of the world. Thoſe miſled philoſophers did not only equal themſelves to, but raiſed themſelves above the gods, whom they taught others and themſelves to adore. And to that height did this miſtake in their Reaſoning fly, that Seneca concludes his wiſe man much preferable to the gods, becauſe the good they did, aroſe from the neceſſity of their own nature; whereas man being left to a freedom in his actions, made them good by his own wiſe choice. Epictetus founds his phi-

loſophy upon that only principle, 'That the 'things within us are in our own power, but the 'things without us are not.' Whereas St. Paul from heaven aſſures us, That 'of ourſelves, as 'of ourſelves, we can do no good.' And our own experience, doth moſt convincingly agree with St. Paul, againſt Epictetus. And whereas a principle in any ſcience ſhould be an uncontroverted truth, we find daily that this principle is an abſolute lie. For that man who thinks that he can with an unerring hand govern his paſſions, has never undertaken the ſubduing of them. And *video meliora, proboque, deteriora ſequor*, agrees much better with our own experience, as well as with St. Paul, who, tho' among the greateſt of ſaints, complains juſtly, Rom. 7. 15. 'That 'which I would, that do I not; but what I hate, 'that do I:' and therefore is forced to cry out, 'Who ſhall deliver me from this body of death?' Cicero's diſcourſe concerning the nature of gods, and Plato's dialogues of the immortality of the ſoul, may convince us how weakly thoſe great patterns of philoſophy do reaſon, even upon thoſe ſubjects where reaſon was not altogether miſtaken. And from thoſe, and all the writings of the antient pagans, I do more juſtly conclude, That thoſe great ideas which our maſters have given us of them, and the eloquence which ſhines every where in their writings, have miſled us from the ways that lead to the new Jeruſalem; and from admiring the beauty of holineſs which

ſhines in thoſe ſcriptures, which have God Almighty and the Holy One of Iſrael for their author and ſubject, and in which we are taught to expect more help from heaven, than from ourſelves, againſt our innate and original corruption, which is more to be overcome by praying than thinking, and can never be overcome without that humility and ſelf-denial, which was abſolutely unknown to the heathens, as I hope to prove in another diſcourſe, where theſe thoughts ſhall have their full ſcope.

I am far from deſigning in this to root out ſelf-love, but rather to direct and improve it. For certainly God has grafted ſelf-love in every man's heart, to the end, man might thereby be the more obliged to love him, to whom he owes all thoſe excellencies which he loves in himſelf, and that he may be thereby obliged to preſerve himſelf as a part of the univerſe, and which is in general preſerved by every man's loving himſelf; and ſo far has God allowed this ſelf-love, that he puniſhes man when he deſtroys himſelf. But that ſelf-love which I here inveigh againſt, is a falſe and impoſture paſſion, whereby man makes himſelf the ſpring, from which all his deſigns follow, the mark at which they aim, and the rule by which they are to be ſquared, than which nothing can be more unreaſonable. For how can we juſtifie ourſelves, in requiring abſolute deference from all that is ours, if we yield it not to that infinite being to whom we owe all;

and as he brought us out of nothing, ſo we ſhould ſtill remember that we are nothing before him. If every man made himſelf the rule, and drew all to himſelf, what a diſtracted thing would this world be, and how impoſſible would it be for any man to live comfortably in it? And as a private man would be eſteemed mad, who in a court, would think that all things ſhould be deſigned there for his glory and pleaſure: ſo much more is man a diſtracted creature, when he makes himſelf the chief aim of all his actions. Whereas, if a courtier take great care to pleaſe the monarch, and to deſign his glory and advantage, he will thereby raiſe himſelf in a ſecurer, as well as a juſter way. And therefore becauſe ſelf-love is ſo ſtrong an orator, and as ſtill at the bottom of all perſuaſion, we ſhould examine cautiouſly, what is urged upon us under the diſguiſe of ſelf-love, and whether we do really love ourſelves when we yield to thoſe things to which we are tempted. I ſhall conclude this period with a ſad aſſertion, That in ſpight of all that men profeſs, yet too many really, at the bottom, miſtake themſelves ſo far, as to think that they have no original frailties, and therefore that they are able to command their paſſions, and that they need no divine aſſiſtance, that they are nothing elſe, ſave that body which we ſee, that they are not to die ſo ſoon, and that the things they are doing now are the only things to be cared for, and will remain with them for ever. And if moſt men have

this Idea of themſelves, I deſire to know how they can draw juſt concluſions from ſuch miſtaken principles.

Another cauſe of our reaſoning ſo weakly, is, that the things of another world are too remote to ſeem great to us, and too ſpiritual to be diſcerned by carnal eyes. The leaſt thing, when placed immediately before our eyes, will intercept, and exclude all further proſpect; and even the leaſt conſpicuous objects, and ſenſual things do, by a conſtant tide of emanations, flow in continually upon us, ſo as to fill our thoughts, and leave little room for any thing elſe. But as a remedy to this, let us conſider, that ſince even corporal, and ſenſual pleaſures charm us only when we think much upon them, it follows, that thinking is the ſource, and origin of eſteem: tho' we ſee not the riches of a golden mine, yet our belief will make us toil for it, and the hope of ſucceeding to an eſtate will oblige us to follow eagerly what that hope ſuggeſts. And ſince 'faith 'is the evidence of things not ſeen,' it does repreſent things to come, with a certainty, that makes them preſent; and altho' it may be objected, that we have ſeen ſome ſuch things as theſe mines, and worldly ſucceſſions, and therefore it is that we believe and love them more; yet that is of no moment. For the miracles that men have heard of, and the wonderful works of providence which we daily ſee, eſpecially when born in upon us, by the conviction of our own

conſciences, ſeem as ſtrong motives as any that ſenſe can afford conſcience, that luminous ſenſe of the ſoul, being ſtronger, and more perſuaſive to any that will hear it, than any of our dull and outward ſenſes, which have only aſſiſtance from ſtupid fleſh and blood: converſation alſo about things ſpiritual and divine, will be in place of ſenſual emanations to us, and will repreſent a future life, and the world to come to a hearkning ſoul, as if it were preſent; nor will the Almighty fail to aſſiſt that eloquence which has him for its only and ultimate ſcope.

The ſoul certainly being a ſpiritual ſubſtance, can more eaſily unite itſelf to immaterial objects, ſuch as a future ſtate of happineſs, than to the terreſtrial objects, with which we fill it; and the only fault is in us, who do not apply ourſelves to the thinking on theſe. Do we not find that ſuch as aſpire to fame are more taken with it than any man is with meat or drink, yea, and life itſelf, for the conqueſt whereof all theſe are contemned: and yet fame is a meer immaterial object, that has nothing affecting in ſenſes otherwiſe than by thinking nothing preſent, nothing corporeal; and generally, the ſpirit of man is more pleaſed with expectation than with any preſent poſſeſſion whatſoever; ſo far, that if we expect any little accident, it will buſie more our thoughts, and faſten them more to it than a thouſand things of greater value already poſſeſſed. This then can be no ſuch hard taſk as our lazineſs perſuades it to be.

Tho' we be convinced of the truths on which I have founded my obſervations, yet we advert not to them, nor heed them. Thus tho' an object were moſt conſpicuous, yet if we dote ſo upon any other, as never to turn our eyes that way, we ſhall not be taken with either its value or beauty. We are bred up in a great eſteem for the things of this world, and ſo are rather preingaged than blind, and buy not that pearl of price, becauſe we have laid out our ſtock on other trifles, which is a great defect in our reaſon, and for which we would contemn other merchants: and this is to be cured by having a true value for things, and by rectifying all our Ideas; and therefore, he who reſolves to reaſon juſtly, ſhould begin firſt to conſider, when any thing occurs, of what uſe it may be, and of what value it is. As for inſtance, Is this land, for which I am ſinfully providing money, worth heaven? or this man, whom I am to pleaſe, abler to make me happy than God Almighty, to whom in this I prefer him? And ſo, like a ſkilful chymiſt, reſolve every thing into its true principles, and then try its value; and like a merchant, who has been often cheated, reſolve at laſt to conſider what ſuch things are worth, whether they will be faſhionable where we are going, and whether they will return us the ſtock we lay out upon them?

For improving this thought, we ſhould conſider, that tho' we diſcover truths, yet we do not take time to ponder them ſufficiently: and thus,

tho' we be convinced, yet we improve not ſufficiently our convictions. Self-love, and the love of eaſe has uſed us to a partial and ſuperficial way of enquiry; and from this alſo proceed theſe wanderings which weaken thoſe pious meditations, and diſturb that earneſtneſs in prayer, by which we can only procure a juſt illumination in our reaſoning; deſultorineſs of thought grows daily when it is not leſſened, and the next day's wanderings are the puniſhment of thoſe which we ſuffered to prevail yeſterday. But ſhould we not be aſhamed, that we cannot think our ſalvation worthy of ſome ſerious hours, ſince it is that which God Almighty has conſtantly deſigned, and followed from all eternity, tho' we are [redacted] concerned in it? And that we can ſpend [redacted] entire hours upon a queſtion of law or mathematics, and yet cannot fix our thoughts upon that infinite being, in whom there are far more infinite perfections; an object that can never be exhauſted, where every thought would open a new ſcene of thoughts, yet more delightful; by which, angels have been for many thouſands of years detained in conſtant raptures, contemplating thoſe admirable myſteries, which the ſcripture tells us, the angels deſire to pry into, finding by a conſtant enquiry, new matter of holy learning, and bleſſed curioſity; and are ſaid by God himſelf to have learned this from thoſe happy Chriſtians to whom thoſe myſteries were firſt revealed, Eph. 3. 8. Learn then, O

Chriſtian, to manage thy ſpirit, try firſt by what means thou uſeſt to fix it on other occaſions, and improving theſe from the obvious advantages that pious fixation will yield above all others; beg humbly, by prayer, a new ſupply to thy native forces, acknowledge to God that thou haſt taught thy own thoughts this perturbation of which thou complaineſt, and hope, that, as by frequent yieldings thou feddeſt that vice into a habit, ſo that by frequent and reſolute oppoſitions thou mayeſt deſtroy that obſtinate and dangerous habit, and introduce a contrary one, which will make thy fixedneſs eaſie and pleaſant. Frequent reaſonings do alſo not only make us argue more ſtrongly and eaſily, but do warm us into a conviction firſt, and then into a love for that for which we contend: and thus lawyers are oft-times convinced, even in the ill cauſes they plead; and heretics fix themſelves in their errors, by frequent conteſts for them. Why then ſhould we not argue more frequently both againſt our ſelves, and with others, upon theſe excellent truths by which alſo we ſhould be engaged in honour to walk ſutably to theſe truths, of which we profeſs to others that we are convinced? and who could be ſo abſurd, as after he has been debating againſt another for his drinking, yet would invite him to a debauch? but, alas, every man loves to debate in his own calling, except the Chriſtian: and it is become as much a ſhame to talk of devotion as it ought to be our

glory and delight; and men ſeem afraid to debate, leſt by being too much convinced of what they ought to do, they ſhould be too much terrified for what they have done; and ſo theſe convictions beget an uneaſineſs to them, when to gratifie their humour they are tempted to renew their ſins.

Hypocriſie affords us a clear proof of this partiality, as well as of man's contracting himſelf; for to confeſs there is a God who is omniſcient, who knows the ſecret of hearts, and before whom there is nothing hid in heaven or in earth, and yet to think that we can conceal our thoughts from his all-ſeeing eye, implies a plain contradiction; as it alſo does to care for nothing but what may cauſe an eſteem in our ſelves, for our ſelves. We really value other mens approbation, becauſe it confirms us in our own: nor would the vaineſt man alive value all the flatteries imaginable, if he thought he could not deſerve them. Yet in hypocriſie we muſt know, that we deſerve not the applauſe to which we pretend, and it is worthy of our thoughts to enquire impartially, how men can reconcile theſe in themſelves; for the moſt debauched reaſon will not adventure upon any contradiction without ſome ſeeming reconciliation. And tho' at the firſt it may ſeem that want of conſideration is the cauſe of this, yet this cannot be; for unleſs we are conſcious to ourſelves that we are acting under diſguiſe, it cannot be hypocriſine; and, on the contrary, hypocriſie requires

great reflection, becauſe it needs much precaution. The reaſon then of the firſt muſt be, That as to God we truſt our repentance, and to his mercy; as if indeed, we did him little wrong, by making his creature appear more excellent than it is, and as if it might prejudge his ſervice to let others ſee, that we are many times more wicked than they, or that we did God good ſervice in encouraging others to be pious by our good example, and that we by hypocriſie do only raiſe an eſteem, or come to an employment by which we may be truly ſerviceable to God in our other actions. But I really think, that the heart of man is ſo narrow, that it can hold only one ſcheme of thoughts at once, and therefore this little ſoul being filled with a deſire of applauſe, and with the ſhame of being ſilly and undeſerving, it reflects indeed, but all its reflections look that way. The man is full of this and intent upon it, and ſo he ſees not the contradiction, how palpable ſoever it be; but yet it is ſo plain and obvious, that I may juſtly conclude his reaſon weak, if not blind, who does not diſcern it. The cure then of this ſubtile cheat muſt be by purſuing this impoſture into its ſecret receſs, by ſeeing this player before he put on his fine cloaths and diſguiſes, by turning all our thoughts to God, and from ourſelves, adverting ſeriouſly and impartially to every little circumſtance in the deſign that is to be conſidered.

I have oft-times admired the prevalency of

cuſtom above reaſon; and tho' brutes, who want reaſon, or children, in whom it is yet ſcarce ripened, be led by it; yet what a ſtrange thing is it, that in men who have reaſon in maturity, cuſtom becomes not only a ſecond nature, but overcomes nature, and is a ſecond nature, becauſe it almoſt extirpates reaſon, which was our firſt nature. For tho' the older we grow, our reaſon ſhould grow the ſtronger, yet it falls ſtill weaker, and melts ſo before cuſtom, that even the virtuous and dutiful actions we do, ſeem rather the effects of cuſtom than of reaſon. For if they proceeded from reaſon, the ſame reaſon which prompted us to do them, would oblige us to act virtuouſly on all other occaſions. And we ſee that we alter our virtues as the faſhions and cuſtoms of our country change. But to conclude this expoſtulation, I cannot but wonder that a man ſhould be called reaſonable, after he has truſted the making laws and moulds for living happily and dutifully to the multitude or crowd, the worſt of all judges; and which we ourſelves contemn as an ignorant, giddy, and capricious rabble.

Of which influence of cuſtom over reaſon, many different cauſes occur to me; for ſometimes I think that cuſtoms eſtabliſh and fix themſelves in us whilſt we are yet young, that reaſon can neither defend itſelf nor us, eſpecially as to unuſual pleaſures, which are the proper and natural objects of our firſt years: and like weeds that

have over-grown the ground, tho' never ſo fertile, they hinder the better plants from growing up. To prevent which, it is neceſſary that we teach young ones to reaſon very early, and accuſtom them to a Chriſtian logic, that is better than what they can learn in the ſchools. Thus we may make cuſtom itſelf uſeful rather than hurtful to reaſon, and teach it to ſerve, whereas now it governs. And I know one who cured his habitual ſwearing by arguing with himſelf, That ſince even the king's enemies were able to reſtrain themſelves from ſpeaking treaſon, by reflecting on its dangerous conſequences, it was ſtrange, that he who was convinced that ſwearing did draw on more dangerous conſequences, could not abſtain from a cuſtom that was altogether hateful, without the leaſt allay of pleaſure or advantage, to which the others might pretend.

Sometimes I think, that cuſtom having the force of the multitude which ſupports it, they all concur to pull back a well-reſolved man from his virtuous reſolutions; and cuſtom prevails rather by numbers than by ſtrength: and to prevent this, it is neceſſary for a man who reſolves to reaſon juſtly, to withdraw for ſometime from the crowd: Prov. 18. 1. 'A man, ſays Solomon, 'having ſeparated himſelf, meddleth with all 'wiſdom;' and Seneca tells us, That *ſanabimur modo a coetu ſeparemur.* Jeſus Chriſt alſo who has triumphed over the world, is by ſtrong in-

terceſſions, to be called in againſt this potent enemy, who has ſhewn us, that he can throw out and diſpoſſeſs that devil whoſe name is legion: but the multitude is never ſo corrupt, but that ſtill ſome are to be found who can aſſiſt us in reaſoning juſtly upon things; and we ſhould alſo remember, that we value ſo little the multitude, that we ſtand not in awe of what they ſay of us, when we are gaining money, or ſatisfying our pleaſures: why then ſhould we ſtill ſpend all we have, and deny ourſelves all pleaſure in following cuſtom, or courting fame; ſince cuſtom and fame are but the dictates of the multitude, an homage which unthinking men are forced to pay the rabble, becauſe they dare not ſeriouſly reflect on what they do? Or which deſigning men pay them in hopes to make them firſt tools to their ambition, and thereafter ſlaves to their tyranny.

But at other times the ſtrength of cuſtom flows from our lazineſs. We love the way that is chalked out to us, and think it ſafe to follow, rather than lead the crowd; and thus we love to affect a cowardly humility, which is the ſource of theſe fatal miſtakes, and ſhews with what ſupine indifference we look on the nobleneſs of our own origin: which is to be cured by a generous reſolution of deſpiſing difficulties; and of being ſlaves, as all perſons are, who love better to obey, than to examine the dictates of others; and we are moſt unreaſonable, when we have ſo ſtrong de-

ſires to lead the multitude to our ruin, as in ſeditious tumults and factions; and yet will be content to be tamely led by them in what is much nobler and of greater conſequence. How much more do we praiſe thoſe great legiſlators, who governed the multitude by their virtues, than thoſe ſycophants who adored them by ſubmiſſions? There is light in virtue and religion, and there is none dares reſiſt it; it is able to aſtoniſh as well as convince: nor are men ſo wicked as not to deſire to be aſſiſted by ſome happy genius, in what they are convinced is beſt. And every man almoſt ſtands only in awe of another, expecting and wiſhing ſome Moſes to undertake their delivery.

Generally ſelf-love ſeems to lead into theſe ſentiments, as thinking the multitude will cry up their own inclinations, and is unwilling to check that multitude from which it expects applauſe; and whoſe many ſuffrages it needs to maintain it, againſt that inward ſenſe it has of its own weakneſs and ſillineſs: and this is to be cured by noble reflection upon the dignity of our firſt creation; and a deſire to be again like to that God whoſe image at firſt we were, and whoſe ſons we may yet be, if we can raiſe our hopes above thoſe lower ſpheres of ſenſual joys and pleaſures which poiſon us when they ſeem ſweet, and cheat us when they appear great.

One of the dreadful effects of our following the example of others, is, that we think it is ſuf-

ficient to be as reaſonable as they: and thus we fooliſh and unreaſonable mortals, ſtint and bound one anothers goodneſs; now this we ſhall eaſily perceive to be moſt unreaſonable, when we conſider that no man will ſatisfie himſelf in being as powerful or rich as his neighbours: tho' theſe be much leſs deſireable for a ſoul and ſpirit, which is the image of an infinite God, and is, after all its beſt endeavours here, very far from attaining to that degree of perfection which is even requiſite to the life of a Chriſtian. Devotion is a race, and who is it that when he runs with many rivals, will content himſelf to be in the throng, eſpecially if the prize be conſiderable: and therefore the apoſtle exhorts us to 'forget 'thoſe things which are behind, and to reach 'forth to thoſe things that are before, preſſing 'towards the mark, for the prize of the high cal-'ling in Chriſt Jeſus,' Phil. 3. 14. We are not only obliged to preſs on to obtain the crown, but being purſued by our ſpiritual enemies, we are concerned to uſe all the ſpeed that is poſſible. And would not we conclude him mad, who if he were purſued for his life, would not deſire to be paſt all danger, but content himſelf that he were not the laſt amongſt thoſe who endeavoured to eſcape?

It is ſtrange, that notwithſtanding that cuſtom does ſo lead us when we go not where we ought to go, but where others have gone before us, yet we oft-times err to a contrary extreme, and by

a contrary reaſon, which is as falſe and more dangerous than the other, reaſoning weakly and falſly from a deſign and deſire to be ſingular, and conſequently to be admired; thus even whilſt in this we oppoſe the multitude, we deſign to pleaſe them too; for no man admires what does not delight him; and probably, theſe ſame contradictors would have choſen rather to have gone to fame in the beaten path, by a direct pleaſing and following of them; but finding a crowd before them in it, which they could not paſs by, they, by a long and a dangerous circuit, run before, and endeavour to keep the paſs on their rivals, and hinder them from coming up at fame; and tho' they want the multitude at preſent, yet they hope to make them follow, elſe they would not differ from them; for few would care to continue alone till the laſt, tho' they love to be ſingular at firſt; yet this humour is a very great enemy to true reaſoning, for it introduces a habit of arguing falſly; and it is difficult in this dark eſtate to recover our road; if we once quit our light, one error emboldens us to commit another, and it is the puniſhment of it when committed; even thoſe who care not to oppoſe truth, love to be conſequential in their oppoſition; for to do otherwiſe, were to be guilty of a double and more palpable vice in reaſoning.

Another great hinderance to right reaſoning, is ſenſuality: for, though I am far from being of their opinion, who think the ſoul nothing but

the animal ſpirits; ſince we cannot conceive how matter can think ſo delicately and ſubtily, yet there is no doubt but the temper of the body has great influence on the mind; and that ſobriety does purifie the blood, and make theſe animal ſpirits fitter organs for the ſoul; as on the other hand, drunkenneſs drowns it, gluttony ſtupifies it, and even after that time has diſſipated thoſe loads which oppreſs the ſoul, there remains a ſtock of dregs which are eaſily inflamed into luſt, rage, and other brutal paſſions, which in a more laſting manner inſlave it. Therefore pagans have recommended ſobriety as a diet for the ſoul as well as the body, and the ſcripture faſting, as a religious duty; and ſince there is none of us ſo brutal, but if we were about to preach, plead, or aſſiſt in a public judicature, we would be careful to avoid all theſe exceſſes, leſt thereby our reaſon might be diſturbed or clouded; we ought much more to ſhun them, with an eye to the ſervice of an infinite God, and the preſervation of our immortal ſouls, minding in this the obſervation of the prophet, 'Wine, and 'new wine take away the heart;' and the advice of our Saviour, 'See that you be not over-'charged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs.

There remain yet two vigorous enemies to our reaſon to be ſubdued, bigotry and raillery; which tho' they be contrary to one another; bigotry treating things that are ridiculous as ſacred, and raillery treating things ſacred as ridiculous, yet

they both conſpire againſt our reaſon, and are the favourite extravagancies of the times, which obliges me to inſiſt the more upon them.

I define bigotry to be a laying too much ſtreſs upon any circumſtantial point of religion or worſhip, and the making all other eſſential duties ſubſervient thereto. It got its name from an occaſion extravagant like itſelf. Rolland firſt Duke of Normandy, being obliged to do homage to Charles king of France, for that dutchy, refuſed to kiſs his foot, except the king would raiſe it himſelf to his mouth; and when it was told him that the ſolemnity conſiſted in his taking up the king's foot and kiſſing it, he anſwered, *Ne ſe begot*, that is to ſay in old Norman, Not ſo by God; Whereupon the king and court derided him, and the Normans were from that occaſion called bigots, as they who adhered pertinaciouſly to ridiculous extravagancies. Theſe latter ages having, in this dotage of the world, produced multitudes, who miſtaking reformation for humour, and ſeeing ſome devout men admired for ſeparating from idolatrous and ſuperſtitious churches, becauſe they would not reform great and fundamental errors, imagined that every thing was to be ſtruck at with the ſame zeal which theſe ſhewed in matters of greateſt conſequence, and by a farther effect of the ſame zeal, they proceeded to force others to concur with them in their extravagancies, which

Du Lange verb. Bigot.

ſurpriſing diſtraction forced men to beſtow on them the name of Bigots; ſuperſtition could not ſo well agree to them, that being only an exceſſive worſhip paid to a Deity, true or falſe, from an ill-grounded fear of miſchief from it: nor could dogmatizing ſerve, that being only a poſitiveneſs in any opinion, joyned to the vanity of thinking, that the dogmatizer had right to dictate to others; nor opiniarity, becauſe that conſiſts only in adhering too ſtifly to any opinion in ſpight of the beſt reaſons; nor ſchiſm, becauſe it is an unneceſſary ſeparation; nor hereſie, for tho' it is an obſtinate error in ſome important point, yet it is always in matters of faith; whereas bigotry reſts only in matters of ſmall importance; but tho' bigotry properly relates to matters eccleſiaſtical in our late acceptation, yet it is by an eaſie ſtretch uſed to expreſs ſtiffneſs in opinions of all kinds; and if we conſider its original, we muſt conclude, that it has been drawn to matters eccleſiaſtic, and is appropriated now to them, becauſe they are the moſt remarkable and frequent inſtances or effects of this miſchievous principle. For we may juſtly ſay, that bigotry is the hypochondriaciſm of reaſon, the bedlam of religion, and the ape of infallibility.

Inſtances of this bigotry, as they are very frequent, ſo they are very antient. The apoſtles themſelves were forced very early to inveigh againſt zeal that was not according to knowledge; and the chief of their ſcholars, who had been ſo

happy as to hear them preach, did yet rend the church by a dreadful ſchiſm, which ſoon after grew to that height, that the weſtern church excommunicated the eaſtern, for differing from them in the obſervation of Eaſter.

The beſt way to deter men from ſpending their time and zeal in the ſervice of bigotry, either as its chaplains, or as its emiſſaries or executioners, will be to conſider the great defects, under which it labours, and theſe miſchiefs which owe their birth to it.

The firſt pernicious effect of bigotry, is, that it abtrudes on us things of no moment as matters of the greateſt importance. Now, as it would be a great defect in a man's ſenſe to take a ſtar for the ſun; or in an orator to inſiſt tenaciouſly on a point which deſerved no conſideration; ſo it muſt be a much greater error in a Chriſtian to prefer, or even to equal a mere circumſtance to the ſolid points of religion.

But theſe miſtakes become more dangerous, by inducing their votaries to believe, that becauſe they are orthodox in theſe matters, they are the only people of God, and all who joyn not are aliens to the commonwealth of Iſrael: and from this ſprings firſt, that they, as friends of God, may be familiar with him, and, as friends do one to another, may ſpeak to him without diſtance or premeditation; thence it is that we hear dreadful nonſenſe inſolently vented in extemporary prayers, ſuch as would induce one to think that

they do not believe him to be a God to whom they ſhew ſo little reſpect; for who can think that infinite wiſdom can conſider them as friends, who dare addreſs to him ſo unſuitably? Bigotry having thus corrupted our reaſoning in matters of religion, it eaſily depraves it in the whole courſe of our morals and politics.

The bigots in the ſecond place proceed to fancy, that they who differ from them are enemies to God, becauſe they differ from God's people; and then the Old Teſtament is conſulted for expreſſions denouncing vengeance againſt them: all murders become ſacrifices by the example of Phineas and Ehud; all rapines are hallowed by the Iſraelites borrowing the ear-rings of the Egyptians; and rebellions have an hundred forced texts of ſcripture brought to patroniſe them. But I oftentimes wonder where they find precedents in the Old Teſtament for murdering and robbing mens reputations, or for lying ſo impudently for what they think the good old cauſe; which God foreſeeing, has commanded us not to lie, even for his ſake.

The third link of this chain, is, That they fancying themſelves to be the only Iſrael, conclude that God ſees no ſin in them, all is allowable to them; and (as one of themſelves ſaid) 'They will be as good to God another way.'

The fourth is, That ſuch as differ from them are baſtards, and not the true ſons of God, and therefore they ought to have no ſhare of this

earth, or its government; hence flow theſe holy and uſeful maxims, ‘ Dominion is founded in ‘ grace,’ and ‘ The ſaints have the only right to ‘ govern the earth; ’ which being once upon an occaſion earneſtly preſſed in Cromwel's little parliament, it was anſwered by the preſident of his council, That the ſaints deſerved all things, but that public employment was ſuch a drudgery, that it would be unjuſt to condemn the ſaints to it, and that the ſecureſt way to make the common-wealth happy, was to leave them in a pious retirement, interceding for the nation at the Throne of Grace.

The fifth error in their reaſoning, is, That ſeeing their opinions flow immediately from heaven, no earthly government can condemn any thing they do, in proſecution of theſe their opinions; thence is is that they raiſe ſeditions and rebellions without any ſcruple of conſcience, and believing themſelves the darlings and friends of God, they think themſelves above kings, who are only their ſervants and executioners.

It may ſeem ſtrange, that ſuch principles as bigotry ſuggeſts ſhould be able to produce ſo ſtrange effects, and many fanciful perſons pretend it to be from God, becauſe it prevails ſo. But this wonder will be much leſſened if we conſider firſt, That the greateſt part of mankind are weak or diſhoneſt, and both theſe ſupport bigotry with all their might. Many virtuous men alſo promote its intereſt from a miſtaken good na-

ture, and vain men from a deſign of gaining popularity. Theſe who are diſobliged by the government join their forces with it, to make to themſelves a party; and thoſe who are naturally unquiet or factious, find in it a pleaſant divertiſement; whereas on the other ſide, few are ſo concerned for moderation and truth as the bigots are for their beloved conceits.

There is alſo a tinſel devotion in it which dazles the eyes of unthinking people; and this ariſes either from the new zeal, that like youth, is ſtill vigorous, and has not as yet ſpent it ſelf ſo as that it needs to languiſh; or elſe, from the bigot's being conſcious that his opinions need to be diſguiſed under this hypocritical maſk.

Severity alſo encreaſes the number and zeal of bigots. Human nature inclines us wiſely to that pity which we may one day need; and few pardon the ſeverity of a magiſtrate, becauſe they know not where it may ſtop. I have known alſo ſome very ſerious men, who have concluded, that ſince magiſtrates have not often-times in other things a great concern for devotion, their forwardneſs againſt theſe errors muſt ariſe either from the cruelty of their temper, or from ſome hid deſign of carrying on a particular intereſt, very different from, and oft-times inconſiſtent with the religious zeal they pretend. And generally, the vulgar believe that all ſuperiors are inclined to triumph over thoſe who are ſubjected to them; many have alſo a ſecret per-

ſuaſion that the magiſtrates are ſtill in league with the national church, and its hierarchy, which they ſuſpect to be ſupported by them, becauſe it maintains their intereſt, and they are apt to conſider churchmen but as penſioners, and ſo as partizans to the civil magiſtrate.

Many are drawn into the eſteem of ſuch opinions as they ſee men ſuffer difficulties for. But this miſtake was foreſeen by the primitive church, who therefore declared that *non Poena, ſed Cauſa facit Martyrem.* Chriſtian prudence does not allow a man to ſell his precious life for an incompetent price; forwardneſs that way does not always recommend an opinion: men of all perſuaſions have died with firmneſs; pagans, yea, women for their country or huſbands have ſhewed a courage beyond any of theſe bigots. The hiſtory of China relates a notable inſtance of fantaſtical bigotry; an hundred thouſand Chineſes, who had born tamely their nation's being enſlaved by the Tartars, without making any effort to recover their liberty, choſe rather to die than conform to the Tartars, in turning up their muſtaches after their mode; vanity well diſguiſed can flatter men with the glory of martyrdom; and it is obſervable that this firmneſs faints often where executions are private; however, this ſhould prevail with a wiſe magiſtrate, never to make religious opinions, criminal.

The true cures then of this diſeaſe ſeem to be, firſt, to endeavour to plant reaſon early and

carefully in the hearts of young ones, or to recover it in thoſe of more advanced years; for this is a far more ſolid and effectual way than the immediate oppoſing, or offering to cure this imperfection it ſelf, will prove; men love their old and familiar acquaintance; travelling abroad conduces much to this cure; for ſuch as converſe only with thoſe of their own perſuaſion, are daily warmed into new degrees of zeal; whereas, when we ſee that men of true ſenſe differ from us, we will be inclined from a Chriſtian modeſty and humility, firſt to doubt our own opinions, and then to hear inſtructions: the orthodox clergy ſhould by their pious lives conduce to this cure; and even laics ſhould, by their ſerious and devout converſation, convince them that ſincerity and piety are not inſeparable from ſuch humorous conceits. Theſe poor deluded people ſhould conſider what miſchiefs and deſolations thoſe Vulcanos of zeal have brought upon this iſland by their dreadful eruptions; there being but very few families, in which ſome of their children have not been ſacrificed to this Moloch: nor can our navies or armies ſecure us while this enemy lodges within us, and is cheriſhed by us. They ſhould alſo conſider, that religious reaſon left to itſelf will at laſt overcome thoſe prejudices, which, like meteors, may ſhine for a time, but will at laſt vaniſh into the common and undiſtinguiſhed air.

But the beſt of all remedies, is, to conſider ſe-

riouſly the doctrine and practice of our bleſſed Saviour (to form our reaſon by which is the great deſign of this eſſay) and therefore they ſhould remember, that our Saviour fore-ſeeing the inconſiſtency of their actions, did obſerve, that they did ſtart at ſtraws, and ſwallow camels; that they tithed the mint and anniſe, but forgot the great things of the law. Our Saviour's reaſoning in the parable of the publican and phariſee, ſhould humble all ſpiritual pride; and his humble and ſubmiſſive form of prayer ſhould bridle the indiſcretion of all rude addreſſers; he ſuffered not the ſons of Zebedee to call for fire from heaven, that he might thereby inſtruct the world how unſuitable their zeal was to his goſpel; he reaſoned againſt Peter's martial ardour, That if his kingdom were of this earth, his ſervants would fight for him; and if he needed any aſſiſtance, he might call for legions of angels: nor can I think, after this inſtance, our Saviour would have truſted Peter, in his abſence, with two ſwords, ſince he was ſo forward in his own preſence, when he had but one: but if others will be ſo blind as not to follow our Saviour's way of reaſoning, let us at leaſt follow it, in praying for them, becauſe they know not what they are doing; yet I wiſh both they and we would conſider, that we reſemble too much at this time the unhappy Jews, who, by fighting among themſelves, for ſmall matters, relating to their religious rites, occaſioned their being totally deſtroyed, and extirpated by the Romans who beſieged them.

I know no greater enemy to juſt thoughts or reaſoning than raillery and ſatyrs, and the new way of reaſoning by ridiculous ſimiles. Moſt men are ſo famous for this kind of arguing, and do by it confute and baffle ſo much all who oppoſe it, that it paſſes for the ſtronger way of reaſoning, victory being ſtill accounted the effect as well as the reward of ſtrength: but yet this way looks ſo ſillie to men when they retire and are alone, that they begin to wonder what it was that pleaſed them ſo before they left the converſation. And therefore I think it worth my pains to ſearch a little into the cauſes of this vulgar error, why men are ſo much pleaſed with raillery, and why it prevails ſo in the world at this day?

The firſt cauſe of this, in my opinion, is, that men naturally love truth, as the eyes do light, or brutes food; for truth is indeed the light and food of the ſoul; yet miſſing it, after much enquiry, and a paſſionate ſearch, they do either conclude there is none, and ſo laugh at all others who ſeek it, or in revenge, contemn it as a cheat; and this breeds at firſt raillery and ſatyrs; even as we ſee, that when gallants are rebuked by a ſevere miſtreſs, they pleaſe or revenge themſelves in railling at her, or treating her in ridicule. As ſtates-men and courtiers ſeldom fail, when thrown off, to uſe the court and employments from which they are fallen, after the ſame manner. And ſince too few ſeek after truth itſelf, naked and unrewarded; others again weary of the toils and ſeve-

rity required in true reaſoning; reſt on this, as the eaſieſt; even as men content themſelves with gilded plate, when they cannot attain to true gold; and raillery has become by this as ordinary as the falſe jewels, with which ſo many now pleaſe themſelves, inſtead of true ones; and at a diſtance, and on the public theatre, even of buſineſs, the one appears briſker than the other.

Raillery pleaſes alſo mens ſelf-love better than truth; for truth is too ſevere to flatter our vanity, and too honeſt to ſerve our revenge; whereas raillery does tempt the jeſter to flatter himſelf, and is an ordinary occaſion for others to flatter him as a formidable wit: nor can the world find ſo fit a tool for revenge as raillery; ſince few durſt even for fear of checks of conſcience ſtab their nelghbour, or for honour wound him when his back is turned, if it were not a pleaſant jeſt, which makes malice paſs for wit, and cheats the ſatiriſts into a belief that they deſign not to wrong him, but to pleaſe the company: the hearers alſo would hate ſuch enemies to mankind, if they were not ſo raviſhed with the way, that they had not time to think on the malice. This misfortune alſo attends it, that it tempts men to do or ſay many things on which they would not otherwiſe adventure; preſuming that their wit, which is ſo much admired, will alſo fright or bribe others from accuſing or puniſhing them.

Truth is a ſober permanent pleaſure, free from all tranſports and hating them, and ſo ſeems dull

and flat to young and warm ſpirits: whereas that paſſion which accompanies raillery, either in joy or revenge, is more vigorous and elevated; and it is indeed a wonder to think what force and energy there is in the ſoul, when the ſails of its imagination are filled with the proſperous gale of applauſe, and by what ſecret ſprings the fancy is able to raiſe it to ſuch heights when it is warmly pleaſed; or what infinite numbers of raviſhing images appear to a ſtrong fancy: and how it creates ſo many pleaſant notions out of other mens infirmities: and what great variety and newneſs it conſtantly produces, forming always various ſcenes of joy, to the wonder even of ſober men: I deny not, but ſome do from good nature, and to pleaſe the converſation, ſcoff and jeſt, and, as I ſaid formerly, ſome ſeeing it ſo much admired, think it is truly good, it being a kind of modeſty, to believe that good which pleaſes others; and ſome ſeeing victory attend it, think it is the ſtrongeſt way of arguing; and, thus, this weed riſes and ſpreads, and we ſit with delight under the refreſhing ſhades; and with theſe raptures of malice or pleaſure, ſcoffers are ſo much taken, that they have not the leiſure to think on what they ought to do, or even on what they are doing; and thus they forget frequently the duty they owe to great men, to whom they have acceſs, and can hardly keep themſelves within that moderation in converſation, eating, drinking, and other exerciſes that are requiſite

for preſerving health and quiet, or for obſerving the rules of decency and diſcretion: I conclude, that jeſting and ſatyrs are ſo far from being a relaxation of ſpirit to thoſe who are wearied with ſerious employments, as is pretended, that they are oft-times rather a new and ſtudied toil, and moſt of theſe extravagancies could ſcarce be pardoned; like bitter and ſour fruits which can hardly be eaten, except when confected with great care and expence. But if we look further into the matter, we ſhall find that nothing is more hurtful to reaſon and piety, more deſtructive to true friendſhip, or more inconſiſtent with ſincerity.

For clearing whereof we may obſerve, that every faculty of the ſoul contributes in a peculiar way to our reaſoning: the judgment produces ſolid arguments; the memory, inſtances; examples, and citations, the fancy or imagination beautifies rather than illuminates its objects with ſimiles, metaphors, and other rhetorical figures; ſo that raillery neglecting the other two, ſports itſelf lightly amidſt thoſe flowers, without minding the great buſineſs; and I have obſerved, that few who have been once bewitched with this way, ever minded any other. This ſuffers them not to penetrate further than the outſide of things, and ſo it is impoſſible, that they who uſe it as their conſtant divertiſement, can have any deep thoughts, or can ſearch into the bottom of affairs.

I have alſo obſerved, that raillery ariſes oft-times from an undervaluing of all perſons and things, and nothing can be more contrary to religion or government than this is. To religion, becauſe, when a man contemns all that God has created, he undervalues what the Almighty himſelf was pleaſed with, and rejoyced in, and ſcorns thoſe great exemplars of piety and devotion, whom God has called his friends, and men after his own heart; and ſo in effect he concludes, that God (bleſſed be his holy name) made not good choice, and knew not how to value men a-right. And therefore I ſtand aſtoniſhed to hear ballads againſt Moſes and David ſo much admired by ſuch as confeſs there is a God, that the ſcriptures are his dictates, and they the pen-men of theſe ſcriptures, and ſo ſecretaries to God: nor do ſuch ſcoffers make good ſtates-men; for none are ſuch, ſave they who from a principle of conviction and perſuaſion, manage public affairs to the advantage of thoſe who employ them: whereas they who believe that nothing is worth their pains, can never do any thing with affection and vigor; and ſince they care not for the things themſelves, and ſcorn ſuch as employ them, they muſt never care for what events attend them. Have we not ſeen ſome of theſe great wits prove the worſt of all ſtates-men in our own days? and as far below the meanneſs in management as they were above the wiſeſt in wit and ſharpneſs. What friends alſo theſe prove is ſuf-

ficiently underſtood to thoſe whom they have loſt for a jeſt, after all the ſervices they could have done them: and it is very obſervable, that if three or four of them be in a room, they who remain after ſuch converſations will fall on him who is gone with all the malice imaginable; and we very ſeldom ſee two ſuch wits true friends.

I ſhall end theſe reflections with this addition, that generally ſatyrs are made up of impiety, malice or bawdery; the firſt, unworthy of a Chriſtian; the ſecond, of a gentleman; and the laſt, of a ſober man; and in which raillers have atheiſts for their maſters, ſatirical waſps for their comrades, and oft-times fools and mad-men for their ſuperiours. Unhappy men who do things that they muſt be aſhamed of, and whereof the pleaſure is leſſened in the preſent time by checks of conſcience, and grows bitter afterwards by fear of torments; a quality our Saviour never countenanced, which his favourites have ever zealouſly decried, in which buffoons and players have exceeded the greateſt kings, the moſt renowned heroes, and the wiſeſt men; a cowardly extravagancy which ever attacks the weak, and a mercileſs humour which triumphs over the unfortunate; upon which accounts all men make it their intereſt to expoſe the ſcoffer, as finding in his ruin their own ſelf-defence; and becauſe they know he cannot be pleaſed except they be miſerable, therefore they conclude, that they cannot be ſecured till he be humbled.

I deſign not by this to leſſen the eſteem due to true wit, and that pleaſantneſs in converſation which ariſes from it as flowers do from the root. The Almighty certainly deſigned to make all men happy, and there is no happineſs without pleaſure; and as he rejoyced, when he ſaw that all that he had made was good, ſo he was deſirous that man might find out this good, both for making himſelf thereby happy, and for inviting him the more to magnify the Creator, and therefore to ſweeten the miſeries which naturally imbitter human life: God has illuminated ſome with a pleaſantneſs of humour, which rejoyces the ſociety into which they come, as the ſun illuminates the room into which it enters; theſe are they who having peace of conſcience at home, are thereby allowed to be glad; and who having wit, employ it in turning the right ſide of things to them, underſtanding as well to find out what is pleaſant in any object as artiſts do to find a mine of gold in a barren mountain. This is the true uſe of wit; and if at any time they uſe it to treat vice or extravagancy in ridicule, it is not from malice to the perſon, but from deſire to reform him, and mankind by him. There is a juſtice in ſcourging, defaming, and baniſhing vice; and this juriſdiction is given by heaven immediately to ſuch as have ſenſe; of whom, upon that account, the greateſt rulers ſtand in awe; and ſo much reverence is due to them, that the reſt of mankind beſtow applauſe accor-

ding to their inclinations: bitterneſs then, and ſullen moroſeneſs in wit is the tyranny of this juriſdiction: if it be inſolent, it is but the wrong ſide of this delicate picture, a flaſhing light, which at firſt dazles, but thereafter blinds; a delicious fruit corrupted into bitterneſs, and a beautiful face wrinkled by fretting humours.

The antients termed wit a ſalt; and that is not fit for food, but for ſeaſoning; it may be uſed plentifully in converſation, moderately in buſineſs, but never in religion.

They who enter into a faction do not properly reaſon weakly: but deſert reaſon altogether, as one does who leaves his own to go into another country, whereof the laws, cuſtoms and language are different. The deſign and center of faction is to drive on ſuch a project, and adhere to thoſe who proſecute it. And therefore nothing muſt be allowed or argued but with reſpect to theſe. Hence it is that in vain you reaſon with them; for one may tranſubſtantiate as ſoon as convert them, all that their friends ſay is unanſwerable, and they contemn and ſcorn what is ſaid by their adverſaries when they cannot anſwer it; there is no crime they dare not commit, for the guilt ſeems but ſmall when divided amongſt ſo many bearers; they warm themſelves by clubbing into a kind of belief, and they vote themſelves into a ſhadow of infallibility; whilſt they cry out againſt others as ſlaves to the government, they become really ſlaves to the faction, their liveries

and chains being ſeen by all, except themſelves; but the great ſalary with which their bondage is to be rewarded, is applauſe from their friends, or it may be the mob, to whom naturally their appeal lies, and the getting into the government, where they will be abhorred for practiſing every thing they formerly decried, and ſo have that reputation for which they toiled, blaſted by their own old arguments; this extravagancy is in it ſelf ſo unacceptable to all devout and reaſonable men, that it is forced to uſe raillery to baffle religion by bigotry, and reaſon by raillery; and I believe that faction was the firſt introducer of the one into the church, and of the other into the ſtate.

My chiefeſt wiſh then ſhall be, that God who has ennobled me with right reaſon, may make me happy in the right uſe of it; that I may neither ſell it for money, nor barter it for fame; and that it may never be dazled by the ſhining brightneſs of favour, nor clouded by the black ſhadows of fear; and tho' the portion beſtowed upon me be very ſmall, that yet I may employ that one precious talent ſo, as that I may have from my glorious maſter that only deſireable character, 'Well done, good and faithful ſervant; 'thou haſt been faithful in a few things, enter 'thou into the joy of thy Lord, Matth. 25. 23.

FINIS.